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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m.

The Reverend Dr. Richard Camp, Director of Ministry in Public Parks, Boston, MA, and former Chaplain at West Point Military Academy, offered the following prayer:

We stand tall in these moments to applaud You, O God. You are an awesome God, creator and sustainer of the universe. In a world uncertain about many things, we pause in this hushed moment of prayer, sure of Your goodness and mercy, certain that Your truth endures forever.

This morning in the presence of many former Members, we are conscious of echoes from the past that resound through the corridors of time, words of truth and deeds of courage. May the faithfulness of these leaders have a ripple effect, touching not only family and friends and colleagues, but also a ripple that will spill out and make history. May their presence here today serve as a cordon of encouragement to the women and men of this Congress.

And Father, we ask again this morning that You give wisdom and courage to all who serve here, that they might chart a course in accord with Your will.

In Your powerful name we pray. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. PHELPS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PHELPS led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Repub-

lic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOME TO REVEREND DR. DICK CAMP

(Mr. SHIMKUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome my second Chaplain at West Point, the Reverend Dr. Dick Camp, who served West Point from 1973 to 1996, a total of 23 years.

Dr. Camp is currently the Director of a Christian ministry in the National Parks. Together with my current House Chaplain, Jim Ford, they have served a total of 41 years at West Point in serving the country and the Corps of Cadets.

To those of us who have had the great opportunity for their counsel, advice and prayers and their thoughts of duty, honor and country, I say thank you, God bless you, and beat Navy.

RECESS

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of Thursday, May 6, 1999, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair to receive the former Members of Congress.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 5 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

RECEPTION OF FORMER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER of the House presided.

The SPEAKER. On behalf of the Chair and this Chamber, I consider it a high honor and certainly a distinct personal privilege to have the opportunity to welcome so many of our former Members and colleagues as may be present here for this occasion. Thank you very much for being here.

I especially want to welcome Matt McHugh, President of the Former

Members Association, and John Erlenborn, Vice President and presiding officer, here this morning.

This is my first Former Members Day since becoming Speaker in January, and since that time I have gained an even greater appreciation for the traditions and the rules of the House. I appreciate all the efforts of the members of the association who spend so much time enhancing the reputation of the House of Representatives.

The House is the foremost example of democracy in this world. The debates we have here are important to the future of our Nation. I hope that my tenure as Speaker reflects the best traditions of this House and the best hopes of the American people.

Once again, I want to thank all the former Members for their good work in promoting the history and enhancing the reputation of the United States House of Representatives. Thank you very much for being here today.

The Chair recognizes the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY), the majority leader.

Mr. ARMEY. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, would like to welcome you all back home.

I see so many good friends here. I see my friend and neighbor, Jim Wright. It was not long after we took the majority and I had the privilege of assuming these duties, Jim Wright called me up and said, "Dick, how are you getting along? Have you learned anything in your new role?" I said, "Yes, I learned I should have had more respect for Jim Wright."

It was a tough job. We all have undertaken hard work and good work here. We have all made our commitment in this body on behalf of things we believed in, not always in agreement with one another.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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I remember my good friend Ron Delums. At one time I was so exasperated with Ron, I said, "You know Ron, you are so misguided, you think I am misguided." He acknowledged I was probably correct on that. But we did I think for a very good part of the time manage our differences of opinion in a gentlemanly fashion.

I see Billy Broomfield there, my mentor, trying to teach me. Jim, you do not realize how much time Bill Broomfield spent trying to teach me to mind my manners.

But we did that sort of thing for one another, did we not? Encourage, restrain, sometimes advise, sometimes scold, but I think all of us can look back. You have an advantage. You have a way of looking back and saying how proud you were for what you were able to do for the vision you have held.

I think if I can speak for all of us here, I certainly know the Speaker made reference to it, we want to do our job now, and we will do it with rigor, and we will probably do it with excessive vigor, but always we want to do it in such a way that when you turn on your TV sets and you look in, you remember the honor you feel and felt that you see us, and we find that you are not embarrassed by the way we conduct business in your House.

So welcome back, and I hope you have a good day.

The SPEAKER. It is a great pleasure to introduce the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR), a good friend of mine, who usually sits on the other side of the aisle, the minority whip of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Mr. BONIOR. Good morning. It is nice to see so many familiar faces.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the time to express my welcome to so many dear friends who I have not seen in such a long time.

DICK GEPHARDT wanted me to extend to you his very best. He is at a very special occasion today as well. His daughter is graduating from Vanderbilt, the last of his children to graduate from college, so he is down in Tennessee today on that joyous occasion. He wanted me to let you know how much he appreciates your service to this country and how honored he is that you would come back and share in this special day today.

Let me just say something about the Speaker while I am here, because I think it is appropriate. You would not be here if you did not love this institution in a very special way, and all who have served here over the years have a very special feeling for this place.

I am just very honored to serve with Speaker DENNIS HASTERT. He is a person that has brought stability to this institution in the time that he has been serving as Speaker of the House. He is trusted on our side of the aisle. He is respected. He conducts himself in a way that serves this institution proud. You can have a conversation with him, and he levels with you in a way that allows you to continue to do

business. That is refreshing, and it is something that those of us on our side of the aisle appreciate.

I just wanted him to know that, and I wanted you to know that, because we have had some rough days around here, as you undoubtedly know, in the last decade. As DICK ARMEY said, we want to get on with the business of the country, and I think he is providing a chance for us to do that. I wanted the Speaker to know that and you to know that we appreciate the fact that he is leading us in a way that shows respect and decorum and respect for the other side's views on issues.

I am reminded of the enormous debt we owe to those with whom we serve and to those who came before us, because it is this continuity that this Congress provides over time that really is the fiber and the strength that endows our democracy with its resilience.

So to all of you, let me say thank you for your sacrifices that you have made, for the energy that you have devoted, for the ideas and the passions that you have brought to this institution.

Let me also at this time also thank my dear friend and my mentor, someone whom I would not be here in the position that I have today if it was not for, Jim Wright.

Mr. Speaker, I have always been inspired by your courage, by your passion, by your commitment, your idealism, your statesmanship, and I just want you to know how much I feel indebted to your service to our Nation, to this institution, and I want you to know how deeply my colleagues feel, particularly those who have served with you.

Your commitment to justice, not only in America but in Central America and other places around the world that we worked on, is something I will always remember and cherish for the rest of my life. So we thank you so much.

Let me just say in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, that we wish you all the best. We look forward to, hopefully, getting to say hello during the day and hope you have a good day with us. Thank you.

The SPEAKER. The Chair now has the great privilege to introduce and recognize the honorable gentleman from Illinois, John Erlenborn, the Vice President of the Association, to take the Chair.

Mr. ERLBORN (presiding). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair directs the Clerk to call the roll of former Members of Congress.

The Clerk called the roll of the former Members of Congress, and the following former Members answered to their names:

ROLLCALL OF FORMER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS
ATTENDING 29TH ANNUAL SPRING MEETING,
MAY 13, 1999

Bill Alexander of Arkansas;
J. Glenn Beall of Maryland;
Tom Bevill of Alabama;
David R. Bowen of Mississippi;

William Broomfield of Michigan;
Donald G. Brotzman of Colorado;
Jack Buechner of Missouri;
Albert G. Bustamante of Texas;
Elford A. Cederberg of Michigan;
Charles E. Chamberlain of Michigan;
R. Lawrence Coughlin of Pennsylvania;

N. Neiman Craley, Jr. of Pennsylvania;

Robert W. Daniel, Jr. of Virginia;
E. Kika de la Garza of Texas;
Joseph J. Dioguardi of New York;
James Dunn of Michigan;
Mickey Edwards of Oklahoma;
John Erlenborn of Illinois;
Louis Frey, Jr. of Florida;
Robert Giaimo of Connecticut;
Kenneth J. Gray of Illinois;
Gilbert Gude of Maryland;
Orval Hansen of Idaho;
Dennis Hertel of Michigan;
George J. Hochbruechner of New York;

Elizabeth Holtzman of New York;
William J. Hughes of New Jersey;
John W. Jenrette, Jr. of South Carolina;

David S. King of Utah;
Herbert C. Klein of New Jersey;
Ray Kogovsek of Colorado;
Peter N. Kyros of Maine;
Larry LaRocco of Idaho;
Claude "Buddy" Leach of Louisiana;
Marilyn Lloyd of Tennessee;
Catherine S. Long of Louisiana;
M. Dawson Mathis of Georgia;
Romano L. Mazzoli of Kentucky;
Matt McHugh of New York;
Robert H. Michel of Illinois;
Abner J. Mikva of Illinois;
Norman Y. Mineta of California;
John S. Monagan of Connecticut;
G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery of Mississippi;

Thomas G. Morris of New Mexico;
Frank Moss of Utah;
John M. Murphy of New York;
Dick Nichols of Kansas;
Mary Rose Oaker of Ohio;
Stan Parris of Virginia;
Howard Pollock of Alaska;
Marty Russo of Illinois;
Ronald A. Sarasin of Connecticut;
Bill Sarpalius of Texas;
Dick Schulze of Pennsylvania;
Carlton R. Sickles of Maryland;
Paul Simon of Illinois;
Jim Slattery of Kansas;
Lawrence J. Smith of Florida;
James V. Stanton of Ohio;
James W. Symington of Missouri;
Robin Tallon of South Carolina;
Harold L. Volkmer of Missouri;
Charles W. Whalen, Jr. of Ohio;
Alan Wheat of Missouri;
Jim Wright of Texas;
Joe Wyatt, Jr. of Texas.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. From the calling of the roll, 55 Members of the Association have registered their presence.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida, the Honorable Matthew McHugh, President of our Association—excuse me, who wrote this script? I know it is New York. The gentleman is recognized for such time as he may

consume and to yield to other Members for appropriate remarks.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You are a very distinguished leader, and I am ready for retirement in Florida, I suppose.

It is a delight for all of us and a real honor to be here to present our 29th annual report to the Congress.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCHUGH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks.

Mr. ERLÉNBOEN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. MCHUGH. Mr. Speaker, we want to especially thank the Speaker for being here to greet us and to thank the Minority Leader and all the Members of Congress in fact for giving us the privilege to be here in this institution that we know and love.

We were pleased also to hear the remarks not only of the Speaker but of the Majority Leader and Minority Whip, Mr. BONIOR, not only because they welcomed us so warmly but because the positive tone of those remarks is encouraging to many of us. I think we have been concerned about the increasing partisanship that has characterized much of the debate in Congress in recent times. Strong arguments on policy differences are healthy, and we expect that, but the negative tone has at times seemed excessive. This, together with some of the negative campaigning, I think has contributed to some of the public displeasure with politics and government.

I say that because, in this context, it was very encouraging to many of us when the Speaker and the Minority Leader opened the Congress. I am sure many of you watched this on TV, or perhaps were here yourselves personally, but they were eloquent really in pledging to work cooperatively to establish a much more positive climate in the Congress. They did not disavow their contrasting views, which was appropriate, but they did commit to restoring a more congenial spirit in which lively debate and legislative action could proceed.

I mention this in part because the Association of Former Members subsequently joined with the Council for Excellence in Government in publicly commending the leaders for getting the new Congress off to such a positive start, and we also offered to work in some constructive way with them to foster this positive climate.

For example, we proposed that we co-sponsor with them a joint town meeting, perhaps on a college campus, at which the Speaker and the Minority Leader could appear together and talk about this Congress and the agenda that they will be pursuing. This was just one idea, and it is entirely up to them as to whether they want to take us up on that offer. But I think the

point we want to make is that as an Association, on a bipartisan basis, we want to encourage them not to agree on all of the issues they have legitimate disagreements on, but we want to encourage them to promote even further this climate of positive debate in terms of the issues.

We discussed this issue, if you recall, at our last Association annual meeting a year ago, and at that time we talked about ways in which we might come up with some concrete proposals to help the leadership in this respect, and I report to you on this as a follow-up to that discussion.

Our most important activity perhaps is our Congress to Campus Program, which continues to reach out to citizens across the country, particularly to our college students. We believe that this effort conveys important insights about the Congress and promotes a much more positive view on the part of the public of the institution of the Congress.

As you know, what we do is send out bipartisan teams, a Republican and a Democrat who served in the Congress, to make 2½ days of meetings available to not only students on college campuses but to others in the community; and through these formal and informal meetings we share our firsthand experiences of the operations of the Congress and our democratic form of government.

Since this was initiated in 1976, 113 former Members of Congress have reached more than 150,000 students through 259 visits to 177 campuses in 49 States and the District of Columbia.

Beginning with the 96-97 academic year, the Congress to Campus Program has been conducted jointly with the Stennis Center for Public Service in Mississippi. The former Members of Congress donate their time to this program, the Stennis Center pays transportation costs, and the hosting institution provides room and board for the visiting former Members.

This is something which I know some of you have participated in. We certainly encourage others of you to let us know if you would like to do that. Those of us who have done it have enjoyed it very much, and I am sure all of you would as well.

What I would like to do at this point is yield to the gentleman from Missouri, Jack Buechner, and to the gentleman from Idaho, Larry LaRocco, who will discuss briefly their recent visits to college communities under this program. Jack.

Mr. BUECHNER. I thank our current President, Mr. McHugh, for giving you an outline about the program that has been so successful, and it has been successful not just for the students at the various colleges and universities that we have been able to meet with but also I think for us, because it gives us an opportunity to find out what the current pulse is on the campuses of America.

It is kind of funny, I just returned from Macalester College, where I

worked with Jerry Patterson from California. While we were there, there was an anti-war demonstration, with American flags upside down and peace signs and body bags painted with red paint. It sort of was "déjà vu all over again," as Yogi Berra would say, to think back into the sixties. But it was students expressing their opinions, and they were politically active.

For 2½ days we sat down with various members of the Political Science Department, the Geography Department, the Social Studies Department, student government leaders, leaders of the Young Democrats and the two members of the Young Republicans, and we discussed the various issues that are currently before Congress, before our executive branch, talking about Kosovo, talking about why we choose to intervene in central Europe and not in Africa. But there was a vibrancy and interest in current affairs that I think would belie what a lot of people in America would consider to be a generation more interested in computers, more interested in a lot of different things, perhaps too much me-tooism and not enough our-ism.

I think that perhaps is just one campus in Minnesota that I can report on, but I found the same thing last year when we went down to Florida International University.

This is such a good program that I would just tell every member of the Association that you should get involved in it. The problem, of course, is that we have got more campuses want to have Members attend than we have Members to attend and finances to cover those.

But it really is a fantastic program. As we stayed up late talking with the students, we found out that there are many questions that are not being answered by our leaders today to the interests that these students have, and they are looking for a forum in which to express it.

One forum they expressed it in was a recent election in Minnesota where we saw the election of the only Reform Party Governor. I was tempted, and I succumbed to it, to buy a bumper strip as I left the airport that said "Our Governor Can Beat Up Your Governor."

□ 0930

But these students had basically said that the two political parties, the mainstream parties, had not offered to them either the chance to participate, and I think that was the interesting thing, the chance to be active in the campaign, not just handing out fliers, but truly active and going and getting other people involved, either working on an Internet web site program in answering responses, to going to rallies in a fashion that was more participatory than just observatory.

These students taught me a lot about why Jesse won in Minnesota, and they weren't all Minnesotans, but they were involved in that campaign, and there is a lesson for us to learn there. But we do not learn unless we talk to people

like that, whether they are our children, whether they are our neighbors, whether they are our old constituents, or whether we are visiting a college somewhere else.

With that, I would like to yield to the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. LaRocco). I notice that all of these people in the gallery came here thinking that they were going to see the Indy 500, but they are seeing a used car lot.

But I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. LAROCO. I thank the gentleman from Missouri for yielding. It is my pleasure and honor today to report to my colleagues on one example of the Association's Congress to Campus Program. The Congress to Campus Program is an innovation of the Association to send bipartisan teams of two former Members of Congress to campuses across the country to meet with students and local residents to speak about the Congress and the rewards of public service.

One such engagement took former Congressman John Erlenborn of Illinois, the gentleman in the chair, and myself to Denison University outside of Columbus, Ohio last October. This was not the first visit of our Members to Denison University, nor will it be the last, I am sure.

The visit to this outstanding institution was arranged in several ways that I would like to explain to the Members. First, many former Members express their interest to the Association in traveling to campuses across the country. They just sort of tell the Association that they are willing to pack their bags and go, and then our Association Executive Director, Linda Reed, matches the dates of the Members' availability with the dates for the visit requested by the host campus, assuring the bipartisan composition of the team.

Second, the logistics in scheduling are coordinated by William "Brother" Rogers at the Stennis Center for Public Service at Mississippi State University. He works with the college administrators on campuses such as Denison to ensure that our time is productively used and, indeed, it was on this occasion.

Third, someone such as Professor Emmett Buell, Jr. at Denison University coordinates the on-site visit. Professor Buell is no stranger to our Congress to Campus Program as the founder of the Lugar College Intern Program, and this program is named after Senator LUGAR of Indiana, a Denison graduate.

The Denison University visit is a premier example of what takes place on campus during such a visit. Our stay was by no means a quick one and our schedule looked a lot like schedules that we have all experienced. You get up early in the morning, you have your dates, and we go to classes all day, meeting with large classes and small classes, making arrangements to go out and meet with the residents, hav-

ing interviews, for example, with the local newspaper and also the campus newspaper.

I think that our visit to Denison University could best be characterized as one where we acted a little bit like our Chaplain mentioned today, Dr. Camp, about the ripple effect, that we have served and been in public service and have been part of our government, and that ripple effect, it is our responsibility to go out and talk about public service, and we did that all day long for a day and a half.

I am reminded of our former Speaker Carl Albert's book, *The Little Giant*, where he was driven to public service and to serve in Congress because of a visit by a Congressman when he was in grammar school. I think that is the purpose of our visits, to go out to these campuses and make sure that people know that public service is indeed a great calling.

Now, the questions that we got at Denison University ranged all the way from campaign finance reform to, of course, the bipartisanship that is needed in Congress to effectively run the government, and the concerns about some of the lack of civility that they were observing here in the House of Representatives and in the Congress in general. We had challenges to meet those questions, but the two of us, meeting together on a bipartisan basis, I think showed that there was a way that we could come together and work together and explain our government to them.

Our experiences were totally different. John Erlenborn's experience, for example, in going to Congress, where a Democrat had never served in that seat, and my experience in Idaho, being from a marginal district, was totally different. I think the students at Denison University appreciated that, knowing that there are different districts in the United States and people come to Congress with different experiences.

This was my second Congress to Campus Program that I participated in. I have been out to Claremont, McKenna University in earlier years, and I hope to do many more. So I encourage my colleagues to look into this program, to go out and use the ripple effect that we have been admonished and encouraged to do so today by our chaplain, and let us go out and spread the word that public service is indeed a very high calling, that this Congress and this House of Representatives is the best democratic institution in the world, and that we are proud to have served here, as I know we all are.

I yield back to our President, Matt McHugh.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you very much, Larry and Jack. As most of you know, the Association is not funded by the Congress, and therefore, in order to conduct our educational programs, programs like the Congress to Campus Program and others, we need to initiate fund-raising efforts and raise the

money ourselves. As part of that effort, in 1998, we initiated an annual fund-raising dinner and auction which we repeated earlier this year on February 23. Both of these dinners, if my colleagues attended, they know were quite successful, both socially and financially, and we owe much of that success to the chair of those two dinners, the gentleman from Florida, Lou Frey, who is our former President of the Association as well.

So I would like to invite the gentleman from Florida (Mr. Frey) to not only tell us about this year's dinner, but also to alert us to next year's dinner.

I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

(Mr. FREY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FREY. I am delighted you are now a resident of Florida, Matt.

We did have a very successful Second Annual Statesmanship Award Dinner at Union Station. We had about 400 people there, including sitting Members of Congress, and it was a great evening. The auctions are fun, a lot of stuff there that people buy, which always amazes us, but a lot of things we have in our closets are really valuable, and we did something unique for the first time. Cokie Roberts was named the first honorary member of the Association. She has been wonderful working with us. We surprised her. I think it is the first time she did not know a secret up on the Hill, but she was given the award.

Lee Hamilton, who many of us served with over the years, was given the award. Lee made about a 20-minute speech. I think he told more jokes in those 20 minutes than he did in the last 35 years in the House. It was a great speech, and really again, a lot of fun.

The main beneficiary of this dinner is our Congress to Campus Program, and the University of Mississippi helps us and works with us and does some things, but it is really up to us to raise the bulk of the money. We donate our time, because there are expenses and everything involved, so this dinner is crucial to our success. I have the good fortune to tell my colleagues that the next dinner will be on the 22nd of February at the Willard Hotel.

We need your help. We really need your help. We had a great committee last time to work with it. Jack Buechner and Jim Slattery were the chairs of the dinner. Larry LaRocco chaired the auction, helped by Dick Schulze who, by the way, it was Dick's idea to get this thing going. He was the one who came up with it, and we owe a great deal to Dick for doing that.

Matt McHugh and Dennis Hertel worked on the Steering Committee. We also have, by the way, if you ever need somebody, call on Larry or Jimmy Hayes to do your auctions. They are great. They run the live auction. We do not understand what they say, but they really sold a bunch of stuff.

Tom Railsback, for instance, gave us a gavel that was used in the impeachment of Richard Nixon that Peter Rodino had given him, and that was really quite a thing. We had a picture taken at the Bush Library taken of the Presidents and all the First Ladies there, and it was autographed by every one of those people. It took us a year to get it, and that was auctioned off. We had baseballs and footballs by everybody. So look in your attics for me, will you, or your basements and find something, at least just one thing. I do not want coffee cups, I do not want key chains, and I do not want a picture of you alone. As much as I love you, I do not want it of you alone. I want it with somebody, preferably a President, or unless it is you, Sonny, your picture I can put on my wall. Big red machine, right?

It is really important that we do it, and it is important you get some tickets. We have 10 months to do this thing. Bell Atlantic, Tom Tauke of our Members, was a prime sponsor, which was a great thing, but if you would all just sell a couple of tickets it would make our job really a lot easier, and it is really key.

One other thing I would like to mention we have been working on for three years and I will just throw in, maybe some of you know or do not know, some of you have written chapters for it, we have a book we have written which will be published in October, and there are about 20 Members of the Association already who have gotten chapters in. Liz Holtzman just promised me that she would get her chapter in, and that is on the record now, Liz, and we have time if anybody else wants to do it. We have a publisher. This is not something that is not going to happen.

The need for this book came about in some of our Congress to Campus Program visits where we have great books. Jim Wright has written a great book, we have a number of people who have done it, but there is not any book that is a compendium of the Congress looking at it from a personal standpoint. All of the political science professors said hey, we really need something like this. So it is there. You have about 30 to 60 days to get a chapter written. If you want to grab me after this, please do that.

One last thing I would just like to say. I think it is just great that Speaker Wright is here. I really enjoyed the remarks that were made by the Speaker, the majority leader and the minority leader. I think like you, I love this place. It has been a real privilege to serve here, and you know, I am proud of it as you are, and it is just fun to see so many old friends. Thank you very much.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you very much, Lou. We hope that all of you will be at the dinner next year, February 22. Lou really has done a magnificent job in heading up that dinner for two years in a row, and it is a fun time.

We have talked about our Congress to Campus Program, which is our most important domestic activity, and we have also engaged in a wide variety of international activities which many of you have participated in and have enjoyed. We facilitate interaction and dialogue between leaders of other nations and the United States. We have arranged more than 380 special events at the Capitol for distinguished international delegations from 85 countries and the European parliaments. We have programmed short-term visits of Members of those parliaments and long-term visits here of parliamentary staff. We have hosted 45 foreign policy seminars in nine countries involving more than 1,000 former and current Members of the U.S. Congress and foreign parliamentarians, and we have conducted 17 study tours abroad for Members of Congress and former Members of Congress.

We also serve, as many of you know, as the secretariat for the Congressional Study Group on Germany, which is the largest and most active exchange program between the United States Congress and the parliament of another country. This was founded in 1987 in the House of Representatives and the following year in the Senate. It involves a bipartisan group of more than 135 Members of the House and Senate. It provides opportunities for Members of Congress to meet with their counterparts in the German Bundestag and to enhance understanding and greater cooperation between the two bodies.

Ongoing study group activities include conducting a distinguished visitors' program at the United States Capitol for guests from Germany; sponsoring annual seminars involving Members of the Congress and the German Bundestag; providing information about participation in the Youth Exchange Program that we cosponsor with the Bundestag and the Congress; and arranging for Members of the Bundestag to visit congressional districts in our own country with Members of the current Congress.

This is a program which is active and growing. The Congressional Study Group on Germany is funded primarily by the German Marshall Fund of the United States, and we have now gotten support, financial support from six corporations that serve as a Business Advisory Committee as well.

I would like to invite now and yield to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. Slattery) to report on the most recent meeting in Kreuth, Germany, which was held on March 30 to April 2 for the Study Group.

Mr. SLATTERY. Mr. President, thank you very much. Let me just say that our friend from New York and our friend from Florida, Lou Frey, deserve a lot of recognition and appreciation from all of us for the work they have done with the Former Members Organization. Lou Frey, you have been relentless, relentless in this Annual Statesmanship Award Dinner in making that

a success, and I think we ought to give him a round of applause, because you all do not know what he does to make that a success. And Matt McHugh, you are doing a super job as President too. We really appreciate that.

It is great to see you all. I am particularly glad to see Bob Michel here, who I think was one of the great Members of Congress in the 12 years that I had an opportunity to serve here. Bob, it is great to see you. You are looking wonderful. Former Speaker Wright I know has had a tough last few weeks with surgery, and Speaker Wright, you are an inspiration to me, you always have been and to many of us here, and I would just associate myself with the remarks of DAVE BONIOR earlier. It is great to see you, and we look forward to your involvement here in a few minutes.

From March 28 to April 2 of this year, the Congressional Study Group on Germany sponsored a delegation of five current and two former Members of Congress to travel to Germany to have meetings with German State and Federal officials and Members of the German Bundestag. The current Members of Congress in the delegation were BILL MCCOLLUM from Florida, who is this year's chairman of the Congressional Study Group on Germany in the House, and OWEN PICKETT of Virginia, who was last year's chairman and the 1998 chairman of the Study Group. GIL GUTKNECHT of Minnesota and CARLOS ROMERO-BARCELÓ of Puerto Rico and LOUISE SLAUGHTER of New York were the current Members participating in this year's event, and Scott Klug, a former Member from Wisconsin and myself represented the former Members.

The first part of the trip took the delegation to Berlin for three days where we had meetings with State and Federal officials, and in addition to that, we had dinner one evening with U.S. Ambassador John Kornblum and the President of the State Parliament of Brandenburg at Cecilienhof Manor, which was the site of the 1945 Potsdam Conference concluding World War II that was attended by Stalin and Truman and Churchill and later Attlee, and it was a very memorable evening, that evening out at the Cecilienhof Manor.

As you may know, the United States is currently involved in a debate with the government of Berlin as to the placement of our new U.S. embassy. The plans are to reconstruct the U.S. embassy on the site of the embassy where it was located prior to World War II on Pariser Platz next to the Brandenburg Gate. Unfortunately, however, because of security concerns now, some of the streets may have to be moved to accommodate the construction of the U.S. embassy, and as you might imagine, this is not something that the government of Berlin enjoys dealing with, the relocation of

streets to accommodate the U.S. embassy. But hopefully, if both sides continue to visit on this, a compromise can be reached.

We also spent some time with the worldwide director of public policy for DaimlerChrysler, and it was particularly interesting to hear from them firsthand the kind of problems they are encountering in trying to merge this huge German corporation with a huge American corporation, and it was even more interesting, the site of this meeting, because we were meeting at the DaimlerChrysler new building in Potsdamer Platz.

As recently as 10 years ago, of course, this area was an area that was divided with the wall and armed guards on both sides, and it was remarkable just to be there and see the kind of construction that is going on in the heart of Berlin. It has got to be one of the greatest, if not the largest construction sites in the world, and there are reportedly some 3,000 cranes at work in downtown Berlin rebuilding the city in preparation for the return of the German government to Berlin this summer.

So it is really a remarkable time in Berlin. If you have the opportunity to travel there on any occasion, I would urge you to do it. It is truly a remarkable city.

Later on in the trip we went down to a small village south of Munich in the foothills of the Alps called Kreuth, and there we spent several days, actually four days with members of the German Bundestag, former members of the German Bundestag, American business leaders, German business leaders and talked about ongoing problems in the European Union, problems with the Euro, problems with the European Union, the role that Europe and Germany in particular will be playing in the world community as we go forward, and at the time we were there the problems in Kosovo were just starting. We had just deployed, or just commenced the bombing activity and our troops had been captured, and it was particularly interesting for me to observe the united front of all of the German political parties in their support of NATO and NATO's actions against Slobodan Milosevic. So that was particularly encouraging to me.

I believe very strongly that this activity with the German Bundestag and this exchange program, the Congressional Study Group, is a very important effort to keep communication alive between the United States, Members of this body, Members of the other body here, and the Members of the German Bundestag through this rather historic time that we are going through. I would encourage other Members, more Members, more current Members to become more actively involved in the German Congressional Study Group.

So Mr. President, I hope that is an adequate report, and again, I appreciate your leadership. Nice to see you all.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you very much, Jim. We hope that this is of interest to you because we are involved in a wide variety of these international-related programs and we think that is something that at one time or another you can participate in productively.

We would like to say a few words about a number of these, and I understand that we are flexible in terms of timing. So the most important thing we are doing this morning is honoring Speaker Jim Wright and we want to leave adequate time for that, but we will cover a few of these additional items since we have the time available.

One of the things that we do is act as a secretariat for the Congressional Study Group on Japan, which, similar to the Study Group on Germany, brings together Members of the U.S. Congress and the Japanese Diet and enables former Members of Congress to participate as well in these discussions of common interest. We find that to be very productive and helpful, especially at times when there is a little tension between the two countries on issues like trade.

We are in the process of trying to expand our activities as well by creating exchange programs with China and with Mexico. These are obviously two countries of great interest to the United States and the Congress in particular, and given our experience with the Study Group on Germany and the Study Group on Japan, we think that we are well positioned to serve as a secretariat for these programs as well.

In the aftermath of the political changes in Europe, the Association began a series of programs in 1989 to assist the emerging democracies in Central and Eastern Europe. With funding from the USIA, the Association sent bipartisan teams of former Members, accompanied by either a congressional or a country expert to the Czech Republic, to Slovakia, Hungary and Poland for up to two weeks. They conducted workshops and provided instruction in legislative issues for the new Members of parliament in these emerging democracies. We also worked with their staffs and other people involved in the legislative process. Public appearances were also made by Members of our delegations in these emerging democracies also.

The Association arranged briefings with Members of Congress and their staffs, meetings with other U.S. Government officials, and personnel at the Congressional Support Service organizations. Visits to congressional districts to give them the opportunity to observe the operation of district offices in our home towns.

Also with the funding of USIA the Association sent a technical adviser to the Hungarian Parliament in 1991 to 1993. With financial support from the Pew Charitable Trust in 1994, the Association assigned technical advisors to the Slovak and Ukrainian Parliaments. The initial support was supplemented by grants from the Rule of Law Pro-

gram, the Mott Foundation, the Eurasia Foundation, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and we had a Congressional Fellow in Slovakia until 1996.

Our program in the Ukraine has been quite successful, and since 1995 we have managed an intern effort there, which has provided assistance to the legislators in the Ukraine Parliament, something which they would not otherwise have had without our support.

I would like to yield briefly to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. Hertel) to report on the program in Ukraine.

Mr. HERTEL. I thank the gentleman from New York, and I will be brief in the interest of time. I do want to congratulate so many former Members of Congress for staying so very active in public affairs and taking of their time in donating it. It gives me great pleasure to report on the Association's very successful assistance program to the Ukrainian Parliament in the last 5 years. Our commitment to the Ukraine is in full recognition that this country, one of the largest in Europe with 55 million people, plays a critical role in the future stability and growth of democracy in East Europe. The recent NATO summit in Washington underscored the important role the Ukraine can play in the evolving Euro-Atlantic community.

Our program with the Ukrainian Parliament has evolved over time from its initial work as a source of technical advice to the development of a young leaders program. The staff intern program was established in the fall of 1995, following discussions with parliamentary leaders who indicated that increased staff support would be the most valuable assistance that could be provided. The initial group of 35 young Ukrainians who served as staff interns were in the 22 to 36-year age group and were drawn primarily from graduate schools in law, government, and economics. In subsequent years the age range has been slightly younger, from 22 to 28. In 1998 and 1999, with funding from the Eurasia Foundation, our program supported 60 interns. An additional 7 interns have been included in the program as a result of private sector support.

The staff interns have been placed primarily in committees where they serve as permanent staff and engage in mainline staff duties, including drafting legislation, analyzing and researching reports on potential legislation, reporting on committee deliberations, and translating vital Western documents. They also participate in a regular evening educational program.

The intern graduates, who now number approximately 200, represent a new generation of young political leaders. We have helped nurture the creation of an organization knitting together a group as a de facto Association of Young Ukrainian Political Leaders, many of whom have returned to the Parliament as permanent staff. Others are in increasingly responsible positions in the Ukrainian government,

and the emerging private business sector, with nongovernmental organizations, think tanks, and the academic community.

We have now reached the point where we are seeking to increase the degree of Ukrainian management of the program to ensure its long-term viability while maintaining the high standards of the nonpartisan selection process. Recent negotiations in Kiev have resulted in the formulation of a transition plan over the next 18 months to independent Ukrainian supervision by two outstanding organizations, one academic and the other the Association of Ukrainian Deputies. The latter is a counterpart to our Association, was established with our assistance, and includes 320 former deputies of the Ukrainian Parliament. The Association is chaired by the former vice-chair of the Parliament who, in a meeting last year with the chairman of our House Committee on International Relations, BEN GILMAN, said that the intern program "is now training clerks for future competent politicians." He is committed to ensuring that the intern program maintains its high standards and continues to train an emerging new generation of Western-oriented young democratic leaders. I am visiting there during the next two weeks to meet with those interns and leaders of the program and to offer your congratulations for all of the successes that they have had under your leadership. Thank you.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you very much, Dennis.

One of the most significant study missions that we have done in recent years has been to Cuba. In December of 1996, the Association sent a delegation of current and former Members of Congress to Cuba on this study mission to assess the situation there and to analyze the effectiveness of U.S. policies toward Cuba. Upon its return, the delegation wrote a report of its findings which was widely disseminated through print and visual media, and was made available to Members of the House and the Senate, as well as to officials in the executive branch. There was also a follow-up to this initial study mission which was conducted in January of this year. Again, the delegation was bipartisan; it made a report upon its return, and that report has gotten widespread dissemination, and hopefully some attention as well. We expect that there will be two additional bipartisan teams of former Members of Congress who will travel to Cuba this fall and will hold workshops in regional centers on topics of particular concern to the leaders in those areas. This program with Cuba is funded by the Ford Foundation.

At this point I would like to yield to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. Wheat) to report on this year's study mission, and he was a participant in that.

Mr. WHEAT. Thank you, Mr. President.

Recently, as the chairman noted, I had the privilege of participating in our delegation to Cuba, sponsored by the Former Members Association, and the delegation included some very distinguished former Members, Senator DeConcini, Senator Pressler, Senator Kasten, and, of course, we were led by our former chairman, Lou Frey.

During my time in the House, I participated in numerous of these delegations all over the world, led by many capable leaders, including my former Rules Committee chairman, Claude Pepper. Unfortunately, I had to leave Congress to find out a Republican can lead a delegation as well as a Democrat. I am referring to the outstanding chairmanship of Chairman Lou Frey, whose enthusiasm, his intelligence, his insight, his probing commentary, enriched the quality of our delegation's experience and led to some very important rapport with bipartisan conclusions about steps we might take to improve our relationship with the Cuban people.

Like many aspects of our relationship with Cuba, there were difficulties with some of the things we went down to talk about. But, since our trip, some of you may have noticed a small change in our relationship, specifically, a baseball game, or rather games.

The Baltimore Orioles twice played the Cuban National Team, both in Cuba and in Baltimore. The results of these games were, well, not much. The Cubans won one, and we won one.

More importantly, international order was not threatened, and our domestic policy was not derailed. Honestly, not even that many people paid attention. It was not the World Series. Sure, 40,000 people came to the game in Camden Yards, but many of them left after the rain delay in the first inning.

Perhaps future historians will say that this game was of tremendous national importance and improved the relationship between the United States and Cuba, but, for now, it was just a baseball game, and like many other aspects of our relationship with Cuba, the negotiations leading up to it were arduous and fraught with misunderstanding and misperception.

Let me tell you just one quick thing about it. One of our main goals in our trip to Cuba was to examine the misperceptions between the two countries. To do that we met with members of the Cuban government, political dissidents, representatives of the very limited private sector, human rights groups and members of the Catholic Church, and we took a little time out for recreation.

We went to a Cuban baseball game. We found that their love of the game was very similar to ours, but everything else was different. The stadium was old and in disrepair. The 10 or 12 cars in the parking lot were of a vintage that is no longer seen in the United States. They were from the 1950s. The top players make \$8 to \$10 a

month, a change some of us think might be good here, and we paid the admission price of 4 cents to get in the stadium.

You may remember that the negotiations about this game were hung up for a long time on what to do with the proceeds. Now, 40,000 people in Cuba at 4 cents each totals \$1,600. Well, in Cuba \$1,600 may be a lot of money, but you can understand that the Cuban government officials drew a little concern about whether the United States was making a real offer or commitment or whether this was just a public relations ploy.

If this game did not occur as a result, so what? It was only a baseball game. But suppose similar attitudes affected other areas of our relations with Cuba? Suppose relatives were kept apart because there were no flights between the two countries? Suppose lifesaving medical techniques and medicines were not allowed to be transported to and from Cuba? Suppose the policy of non-cooperation kept illegal drugs flowing into the United States?

When our delegation returned from Cuba, we met with officials at the State Department to discuss the mixed signals that we were sending to Cuba. We do not know whether our conversations made a difference or not, but we do know the two games were played.

Let us hope similar results occur for the 12 substantive policy recommendations that we proposed. I will not bore you with them this morning, but let me just sum them up by saying they are designed to encourage greater communication and exchange between the Cuban people and the American people.

If each and every one of our recommendations made on a bipartisan basis were implemented, international order would not be threatened, our domestic policy will not be derailed, the Cubans might win a little, the United States might win a little and, hopefully, future baseball games could occur in the context of a real world series.

Thank you.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you very much, Alan.

As I mentioned earlier, one of the things we do is organize study tours to a variety of countries in which Members and their spouses at their own expense participate in educational and cultural experiences. We have had a number of very interesting study tours, including ones to Canada, China, Vietnam, Australia, New Zealand, the former Soviet Union, Western and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and South America.

I want to alert the membership that later this year in the fall we are going to be planning a study tour to Italy. This should be fascinating, not only because of Italy itself, but we have three former Members of Congress who are presently in Rome as ambassadors. Tom Foglietta is our Ambassador to Italy; Lindy Boggs, a former Chair of our Association, is the Ambassador to

the Holy See at the Vatican; and George McGovern is our Ambassador to the Food and Agriculture Association. So we anticipate we will be well treated and that the study tour will be a very interesting one when we go in the fall.

In September of 1998 the Association conducted a study tour of Vietnam, and I would like to invite the gentleman from Virginia, Bob Daniel, to report briefly on that trip.

Mr. DANIEL. Thank you, President McHugh.

(Mr. DANIEL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks, and include extraneous material.)

Mr. DANIEL. This fall, as was mentioned, a delegation of four former Members of Congress visited Vietnam for 6 days. In Hanoi, meetings were held with former Representative, now U.S. Ambassador, Pete Peterson and the embassy staff, representatives of the U.S. Missing in Action Office, members of the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry and Assembly, representatives of the non-governmental organizations and others in leadership positions.

In Ho Chi Minh City, the former Saigon, the delegation met with American and Vietnamese businessmen, bankers and lawyers, the head of the International Relations Department at the Vietnam National University, the publisher of a major newspaper and staff at the U.S. consulate. Time also was provided to visit cultural attractions and observe Vietnamese people and their lifestyle in everyday settings. In addition, trips were taken away from the city to the Mekong River and its Delta and to other rural and industrial areas.

We found Vietnam a difficult country to understand. There is no question that it is a poor third world country with minimal infrastructure and tremendous economic problems.

It is in many ways a land of contrasts. It has a Communist government whose importance seems to diminish the farther one goes into the countryside or the farther one goes away from Hanoi. The average yearly income in the North is \$300 a year. In the South, it is \$1,000 a year. However, a great many people in Vietnam own expensive motorbikes that cost up to \$2,500. Obviously, there must be a large underground economy.

The Vietnamese seem to want foreign investment, especially from the United States, but the many rules, huge bureaucracy and rampant corruption sent out a different message.

There is relatively little investment from the United States and very little U.S. aid of any kind. Vietnam is probably 5 to 10 years away from being attractive to many foreign investors, although the large number of literate workers and the very low pay scale have attracted some companies.

Despite the poverty, most people have the basic essentials such as food, mainly rice, and minimal housing.

While there is dissatisfaction, the economic problems appear to be accepted as a normal part of life.

Sixty percent of the population is 26 years of age or under. Eighty percent is under the age of 40. The Vietnamese are working to establish a banking and legal system and are attempting to privatize basic industries. Government representatives are cooperating with the U.S. Embassy and the Missing in Action Office to identify the remains of 1,564 Americans still missing in action.

Vietnam is the fourth largest country in Southeast Asia with a population of 77 million people. It seems to be a low priority in terms of U.S. foreign policy. It appears that a small amount of interest, exchange programs and aid money could go a long way in building relations with a country that, despite the war, does not harbor strong anti-U.S. feelings.

REPORT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE U.S. ASSOCIATION OF FORMER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS: VISIT TO CUBA, JANUARY 10-16, 1999

Members of Delegation: Hon. Louis Frey, Jr., Chairman; Hon. Dennis DeConcini; Hon. Robert W. Kasten, Jr.; Hon. Larry Pressler; Hon. Alan Wheat; Mr. Walter Raymond, Jr.; Mr. Oscar Juarez

SUMMARY

The U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress sent a seven-member, bipartisan delegation to Cuba from 10 to 16 January 1999 to see first hand current political, economic and social conditions in Cuba and to engage in a series of frank discussions concerning U.S.-Cuban relations. The delegation was composed of former Representative Louis Frey, Jr., Chairman; former Senator Dennis DeConcini; former Senator Robert Kasten, Jr.; former Senator Larry Pressler; and former Representative Alan Wheat. They were accompanied by Walter Raymond, Jr., Senior Advisor of the Association and Oscar Juarez. The trip was funded by a grant to the Association from the Ford Foundation.

The delegation pursued its objectives through formal meetings with Ministers, bureaucrats, political dissidents, independent journalists, foreign diplomats, Western businessmen and informal meetings with a cross-section of individual Cubans. Three members of the delegation had participated in a similar fact-finding mission to Cuba in December 1996 and were able to observe changes in conditions in Cuba over the past two years.

The delegation's approach was based on the realities of the current relationship of Cuba to national security objectives as well as the sensitivities of the Cuba issue in political circles in the United States. In addition, the concomitant interests of the Cuban people to meet basic human needs and to work for the development of an open society, as well as their desire to be respected according to their sense of Cuba and their national identity, were taken into consideration by the delegation in making their recommendations.

Policy Background

U.S. policy to Cuba is based on a series of long-standing Congressional and Executive Actions. The essential ingredient is the long-standing embargo, designed to put maximum pressure on Castro. This policy, which began in 1960, was in direct response to the establishment of Communism in Cuba and the development of a close security relationship with the Soviet Union. The Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 and the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (Libertad) Act of 1996

sought to further strengthen Cuba's isolation and to take advantage of that to force major political change. These policies over almost 40 years showed to the world the U.S. resolve to protect its borders and the Western Hemisphere as well as opposition to Castro and his communist dictatorship.

Times have changed. The end of the Soviet subsidy in 1992, which totaled between \$5 to 8 billion per year, and the collapse of the Soviet Union have changed the strategic equation. Moscow no longer is subsidizing Cuba, the island does not represent a base of military operations against the United States and Cuba is not a national security threat to the United States. Increasingly, Cuba is out of step with the entire Western Hemisphere which has been engulfed by a democratic wave. On the international level, Cuba is increasingly irrelevant: the communist revolution has failed and Castro is an anachronism. On the domestic level in the United States, Cuba continues to be an important issue. The only national security threat would be a chaotic transition of power in Cuba that could lead to a mass exodus of Cuban citizens to the United States mainland.

Cuba Today

A review of Cuba begins with the understanding that the Castro regime remains very much a police state and suppresses any independent political expression. The country is controlled by Castro through the military, the Ministry of Interior and the police. There is little regard for human rights, no freedom of the press and few political dissidents because of the pressures applied by Castro. Despite U.S. policies over the past years, pending unforeseen circumstances, Castro will remain in control until his death.

Economic belt-tightening is the order of the day. The delegation was briefed on economic restructuring affecting various state-run industries designed to increase the efficiency of the state economy. At the same time, heavy taxes and other pressures have resulted in a decrease in the number of small self-employed enterprises. The management of a number of state enterprises has been taken over by former military officers. These officers are positioned to be part of a post-Castro elite. The ruling class in Cuba, while not guilty of conspicuous consumption, live comfortably and have benefited within the parameters of the controlled economy. The overall impact of developments in the past two years suggests that prospects for the economy are slightly better—but this is a result of a significant growth of tourism and the close to \$1 billion of remittances sent by Cuban-Americans living in the United States to their families and friends in Cuba. Remittances have been the biggest boost to the economy at this time.

The Pope's visit made some impact and appears to have given the Catholic Church more operating space. Although the percentage of Catholics in Cuba is significantly less than Poland, the Pope's visit had an invigorating effect. Church attendance, while still comparatively moderate, has risen and the Church has been able to increase its support activities including the distribution of humanitarian assistance. Castro has been forced *de facto* to accept humanitarian assistance in a manner which reaches the Cuban people. On the basis of informal conversations, it appears that another consequence of the visit is that it has given Cuban citizens more of a sense of connection with the "outside world" and a greater willingness to interact. In other words, a potential key impact of the Pope's visit is that it has started a process of opening things up.

The United States is receiving only limited cooperation from its allies, including those in Europe, on key issues such as workers'

rights. Foreign enterprises continue to pay the Cuban government for work performed, and the Cubans in turn pay the workers in pesos at an artificially low exchange rate. The Europeans continue to press for greater respect for human rights to be observed but with little demonstrable success.

The Cuban people retain a great deal of pride in their homeland—even those who are not happy with Castro. There is a concern about the lack of respect for Cuba by the United States which goes back to the 19th Century. The Cubans had been fighting for many years against the Spanish, yet the Americans entered the war later and called it the Spanish-American War. Little acknowledgment was given to the many Cubans who died for their country's freedom.

Much of the U.S. policy toward Cuba recently has been dictated by domestic politics. For instance, compare the difference in the current U.S. approach to three communist countries, China, Vietnam and Cuba. China has been given most favored nation trade status. Vietnam has been recognized officially, trade has been encouraged and a trade agreement is in progress. However, with Cuba there is an embargo that is close to 40 years old and continues despite the changed geopolitical circumstances resulting from the demise of the Soviet Union.

Policy Considerations

In order to understand the delegation's recommendations, it is necessary to start with a clear definition of policy objectives. The first question from the United States' standpoint should be what is in the best national security interests of the United States. Assuming that the assessment is correct that whatever the United States does will not drive Castro from office, the concentration should be on what can be done to help the Cuban people in the short term by meeting certain basic human needs and by helping enfranchise economically an ever larger group of independent Cubans. In the longer term, these steps will contribute to laying a framework for a peaceful transition toward an open society compatible with the emerging democratic world throughout the Western Hemisphere.

The United States can not let Castro dictate its actions on non-actions; U.S. policy must be determined on its own merits. Some actions may be taken unilaterally that could benefit the United States or actions could be designed to benefit the Cuban people without expecting any concessions from the Castro government. However, there may be some proposed actions, such as those set forth in the Helms-Burton Act, which should be taken only if the Castro government acts or reciprocates.

U.S. leaders must endeavor to do away with a schizophrenic approach to Cuba. U.S. policy has been stated expressly as designed to help Cuban political development by supporting the growth of an independent sector and a middle class. The delegation supports this. At the same time, U.S. policies also should strive to meet certain basic needs of the Cuban people. For instance, if it makes sense to send medical supplies or food to Cuba, a maze of rules and regulations should not be attached which often result in supplies not ever reaching Cuba. Castro is given a public relations victory and, more importantly, vital assistance does not reach the Cuban people. The same can be said in many other areas, including travel where the delegation believes U.S.-imposed bureaucratic limitations hamper the maximization of people-to-people contact programs. Some of these specific areas will be discussed in the body of this report. If policy were consistent with the rhetoric and the United States were intended to isolate Castro totally, then all

contact should be ended, including the massive number of remittances sent from the Cuban-American community. This does not make sense—and the delegation does not favor such a drastic step—but it does illustrate the strange position that exists.

The common sense rule should be applied regarding the use of rhetoric. For instance what is important to the United States? Is it more important that a certain act be taken to accomplish a specific result, or is it more important that rhetoric be used to talk about the certain act? In some cases both may be done; in other cases it will be counterproductive to conduct foreign policy encased in domestic-focused rhetoric. As an example, political dissidents, independent journalists, representatives of religious organizations and NGOs all express concern about the way in which Washington rhetoric links NGOs and the construction of civil society in Cuba with the removal of Castro, as stated in 1992 and 1996 legislation. The rhetoric lays dissidents and independents open to the charge of being "tools of subversion against the Castro regime."

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is time to deal with Cuba as it is today not in terms of the Cold War which dominated post-war politics for 40 years. Does this mean the embargo should be lifted? If the sole purpose of the embargo is to drive Castro out, it has not worked and it is not going to work. And it has not impacted on Castro's leadership elite. If other legitimate ends are being accomplished, then it should be left in place. Should the Helms-Burton Act be changed? While it continues to put pressure on the Cuban Government to resolve issues of the confiscation of property, Titles I and II of the Helms-Burton Act should be liberally interpreted as this provides help directly to the Cuban people. On this point there are differences within the delegation. The delegation does agree that Titles I and II of the Helms-Burton Act should be more liberally interpreted as this provides help directly to the Cuban people. Further consideration should be given to modifications of Title IV if EU nations provide greater recognition to U.S. property claims. Policy modifications are recommended with the full realization that Cuba continues to be a communist dictatorship. Policy adjustments which the delegation are proposing are in the interests of the United States and the Cuban people, not Castro.

The United States should exhibit a greater sense of confidence that increased contacts between the United States and Cuba will work to the advantage of the development of a more open society rather than to help Castro. People-to-people contacts, increased travel, an unlimited supply of food and medicines are not viewed by the Cuban people as an aid to Castro, but rather as support to the Cuban people.

Recommendations

1. *Remaining impediments to exchange programs should be removed. People-to-people contacts should be greatly expanded, including on a two-way basis.* The issuance of general licenses should be expanded to a wide range of fields including educational, cultural, humanitarian, religious and athletic exchange. Cuban-American residents in the United States should be included under a general licensing provision with no limit to the number of visits to Cuba per year. The two-way aspect of this program is important, permitting Cubans (including Cuban officials) to have an increased exposure to the United States so they have a shared educational and cultural experience to help dispel stereotypes. Such exchanges are not a threat to US national security. If the Cuban Government

is reluctant to sanction such exchanges to the United States, it could reflect concern over defections resulting from dissatisfaction with conditions in Cuba.

2. *Direct, regularly scheduled flights between the United States and Cuba should be authorized and established.* This is the best way to maximize person-to-person contacts and to facilitate humanitarian assistance. The delegation recognizes that such a move may necessitate a Civil Air agreement. The gains outweigh concerns about enhanced recognition that this may give Castro. An alternative could be the approval of foreign airlines to make stops in the United States enroute to Cuba, a step that could be pursued through IATA.

3. *Pressures should be sustained on Cuba to release political prisoners and to ameliorate prison conditions. The delegation recommends continued contacts with the International Committee of the Red Cross and other Human Rights Groups in Latin America and Europe to press them to seek prison visits and to pressure the Castro regime to recognize basic human rights standards for prisoners of conscience.* There has been no perceptible change in human rights conditions since the Pope's visit, despite an initial release of some prisoners.

4. *All restrictions on the sales and/or free distribution of medicines and medical supplies should be removed.* A general license should be given for donations and sales to non-governmental organizations and humanitarian institutions, such as hospitals. Considerations should be given to identifying a U.S. purchasing agent who could serve as an expeditor and independent bridge between the U.S. pharmaceutical firms and Cuban "customers" to facilitate sales and to monitor delivery.

5. *Unrestricted sales of food and agricultural inputs should be authorized.* This policy, if unencumbered by regulations that undercut the effectiveness of this initiative, will help the Cuban people. Even operating within the parameters of the Presidential Statement, there are steps that can be taken to increase agricultural production and the capabilities of the farmers. The delegation has commented on this in some detail in the report and believes that creative ways can be found to accomplish the objectives.

6. *Commercial shipping carrier companies (such as DHL, UPS or other shippers) should be authorized regular delivery stops in Cuba.* Accompanying arrangements would need to be made in Cuba for safe delivery to meet carrier standards, including a contractual arrangement with a Havana-based representative organization. *Regular sea transportation also should be authorized.* Expanded air and sea shipping will facilitate the delivery of gifts of food, agricultural supplies, medicines and medical equipment. These new transportation links also would facilitate humanitarian efforts by private Americans to ship larger "care packages" directly to Cuban citizens and thus supplement support from remittances.

7. *The delegation supports a policy to expand remittances in amounts allowed and to permit all U.S. residents, not just those with families in Cuba, to send remittances to individual Cuban families.* Greater utilization of the Western Union office in Havana should be considered as a means to expand the number and diversity of remittances.

8. *The delegation believes a regional effort should be studied to reduce the flow of pollutants into the Gulf of Mexico with its concomitant impact on sea wildlife environmental damage to the shores of various countries affected by raw sewage outflows from Cuba.*

9. *An independent group should review Radio Marti broadcasting to insure that the news package is balanced, meets all required professional standards and covers major international*

stories. This is the second Association trip to Cuba in which the delegates found no independent Cuban citizens who had seen TV Marti. It is recommended that funds supporting TV Marti be redirected to an enrichment of Radio Marti or dedicated to an expansion of telecommunications linkages. (See Recommendation 10)

10. *Technical breakthroughs in the telecommunications industry should be explored to increase information links to Cuba.* Internet, e-mail, cell phones and other state-of-the-art communications slowly are bringing information and ideas to the country. It is recommended that the U.S. Government and Congress consider authorizing U.S. telecommunications companies to explore possibilities for establishing more open and diverse communications between the United States and Cuba.

11. *Consideration should be given to opening property settlement discussions and establishing a process with a payment schedule, even if actual funding is deferred to a future date.* The Cubans acknowledged that this is an outstanding issue in the bilateral relationship and they claimed that they were prepared to discuss settlement. There may be a role for a third party arbitrator to facilitate this negotiation.

12. *Policy steps which are just pinpricks should be avoided, as they accomplish little and impact negatively on a policy to open Cuba up to change.* As an example, the proposal for a baseball exchange is a positive step, but the U.S. announcement explicitly dictates how proceeds for games in both Baltimore and Havana are to be used. Each country should decide how the proceeds will be spent. The ticket price in Havana is approximately four cents, so the issue is largely irrelevant.

BACKGROUND TO POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND OTHER OBSERVATIONS BY THE DELEGATION *Political Conditions*

Cuba remains very much a police state under the tight domination of a single ruler. The post-Castro era could involve a conflict between nomenklatura elements (younger, middle-to-senior level officials), who have vested interests in the system and are prepared to consider steps toward economic reform, and a law-and-order wing, largely housed in the military and the Ministry of Interior. Equally possible, however, could be the lack of an effective leadership to fill the space, largely as a result of Castro's failure to allow reasonable political development in the country as a preparatory step for a peaceful and constructive transition. An alternative course, however, might occur if time and circumstances permit the growth of an increasingly independent economic infrastructure in which more citizens become economically enfranchised and a broader segment of society has a vested interest in a stable transition.

The lack of a political opening was palpable. Castro remains opposed to any alternative system or actions independent of the system. Internal crackdowns against crime are designed to improve the command economy, not to change it. In meetings with a number of intellectuals, independent journalists and political activists, several interesting points were raised. However, among these representatives of the political opposition there were some differences of opinion. The political dissidents underscored in very personal terms that there was a continued crackdown. They said the probability was very real that, although they had spent time in jail in the past, this might happen again in the upcoming year. They also described the regime's procedure of arresting people and detaining them for up to 30 days without trial and then releasing them. They added that Cuban authorities are aware that trials may draw major Western press and that they

seek to make their message known by selective detention. They acknowledged the lack of coordination among the dissidents. They may represent a moral force but, at this point, they do not occupy significant political space.

The political independents did not see much, if any, improvement in living or working conditions as a result of the Pope's visit, although independent journalists thought there was a bit more flexibility vis-a-vis journalists. All agreed that the economy is in bad shape. The dissidents described the existence of two embargoes—the one imposed by the U.S. Government and the other imposed by the Cuban Government against its own people. They were underwhelmed by support from the EU and noted that some workers had tried unsuccessfully to block Western investments unless the Europeans pressed for adherence to the Arcos principles. At the same time, they said that there were more than 300 foreign businesses in Cuba, that this increases foreign influence and in the long run could be a plus.

The delegation was rebuffed in its efforts to visit four leading dissidents, who were seized without charges in 1997 and still have not been brought to trial. The dissidents in question were Marta Beatriz Roque, Rene Gomez Manzano, Felix Bonne and Vladimiro Roca. The delegation had a particular interest in meeting with them as the earlier Association delegation had met the four dissidents in Havana in 1996. The delegation also pressed the Cuban authorities to allow the International Committee of the Red Cross to make prison visits. Although some other groups have, on occasion visited Cuban prisons, the ICRC has not been allowed into Cuba for ten years. ICRC visits—with their subsequent confidential report to the host government—would be a positive step.

It is hard to evaluate the degree to which the Pope's visit has emboldened the local population to exercise more independence, but the delegation sensed that the post-Pope visit atmosphere was somewhat more positive. There is active interest in more contacts and communications. Some looked to President Clinton's declarations on January 5 as a potentially important step to expand contacts and access. Others thought increased possibilities exist for telecommunications breakthroughs, including internet, which will permit more extensive communications with persons outside of Cuba. Representatives of NGOs also believe that they have developed more operating space, a potentially encouraging sign for the future.

Economics—Cuban Style

The delegation was given a comprehensive review of the Cuban Economy by Economics Minister Jose Rodriguez. Rodriguez came from the academic world and his presentation did not include a self-defeating propagandistic spin. The 1996 Association delegation met with Rodriguez and his earlier analysis has substantively held up quite well. He underscored that growth recorded in 1996 and 1997 had flattened out in 1998 to 1.2 percent. The Government is engaged in a major restructuring of the industrial sector, seeking to increase productivity by cutting subsidies to unprofitable state-owned enterprises. This causes unemployment and other adjustment problems. A number of state-owned companies are being taken over and operated by former military officers.

Rodriguez claimed that 81 percent of the state enterprises now are profitable, as opposed to 20 percent in 1993.

An exception to the pattern has been the critical sugar industry, where production lags because of poor production techniques and devastating weather. A reorganization of the production capacity is underway and

some less productive mills will be closed. This will cause labor dislocation and the need for labor retraining to demonstrate how to increase unit yield. This reorganization also includes a shift from a vertical to a horizontal system. Instead of all instructions and all infrastructural support coming from one central point, the reorganization gives self-supporting industrial elements, such as shipping and packing units, greater ability to make decisions.

The Minister indicated that incentives programs were being installed in agriculture and other areas. He suggested there was a role for farmers with an entrepreneurial flair but that such people—the emerging independent cooperative farmers—need to understand about incentives and to be motivated to work for them. He said that by appreciating their role, these independent farmers can strive to earn foreign currency and sales. The farmers need new modern equipment to replace the old, obsolete and often broken Soviet agricultural equipment. The question was raised about the free market. Rodriguez referred to incentives within the socialist system where quotas were provided to the enterprise and the worker and once they achieved that quota, the additional production could be taken to the market for sale. Returns would be shared by the workers and the enterprise which would keep a portion of the funds received to enhance further production rather than turn revenue over to the State. However, Castro tends to undercut some of the potentially positive aspects of this trend by trying to eliminate or minimize the "middle men" who help the independent farmers send their product to the markets.

Tourism is the largest income producer for Cuba. Rodriguez said that there were 1.4 million tourists in 1998, a 17 percent growth is expected in 1999 and a total tourist inflow of two million is anticipated in 2000. He said tourism helped compensate for the sharp decline in sugar exports. He made no reference to the decisive impact that accelerated remittances from the United States have had on the Cuban economy. The delegation raised the question of the tourist industry—such as foreign owned or operated hotels—paying the government for the salaries of its employees. He responded that this was the way the socialistic system works. He added, however, that there might be some alterations to the payments system, but the state would continue to monitor and control it. The delegation stated that such procedures were unacceptable to most businessmen and disadvantaged the employee.

Rodriguez maintained that the private sector is growing, but it has to react to stiffer competition. Paladares (private restaurants) continue to be active, although some have closed because of competition. Others have opened. Castro continues to hinder each effort to establish even the rudiments of a private sector. For example, the paladares not only are limited to only 12 customers a night, but they also are not allowed to sell lobster or steak, although some do. The delegation expressed concern that the number of small private enterprises had dropped; Rodriguez said the private sector was growing. Our figures indicated that the number had gone down from approximately 215,000 to about 150,000. He acknowledged small private activities were heavily taxed, noting that private rooms—totaling 8,000 according to Rodriguez—can be rented if the owner receives a license and pays a tax. Cuban officials do not see these as punitive taxes, underscoring that the taxes are essential to provide dollars to the state. They state that clearly the private sector would not continue to rent rooms and open paladares if they did not think it provides economic gain for them.

In a subsequent discussion, a senior official of the Ministry for Foreign Investment emphasized that there is a new Cuban law concerning foreign investment which reportedly will make it easier for foreign investors. He stated that now there are about 360 joint ventures in the country. While the Helms-Burton Act has retarded investment, the official believes that foreign investment now is increasing. He cited recent foreign investments in the development of an electric generation plant, financial commitments to joint ventures to establish business centers—principally to be occupied by foreign companies—condominiums, free trade zones and industrial parks.

In addition to the massive infusion of remittance dollars, ordinary Cuban citizens are finding other ways to receive dollars. People appeared to be coping, possibly a bit better than two years ago. Western companies have found ways to supplement the salaries which they pay to workers via the state by a system of hard currency bonuses. Castro's desperate need for dollars means that he is prepared to look the other way and let dollars come from these various sources. However, through severe taxation and the construction of a shopping mall selling Western goods to Cuban citizens, Castro seeks to gain access to some of the dollars flowing into the island.

The construction of a major new modern airport (with Canadian funding) and a large shipping terminal to berth cruise ships are two additional examples of steps that will increase travel to Cuba and contact between the Cuban population and visitors. These facilities also will increase the amount of dollars in circulation, some of which will reach the Cuban citizens. Tourism is the number one income producer for the regime. At the same time, some farms and industries have established a greater profit share with workers receiving dollar bonuses and farmers, many of whom now are defined as "independent" farmers, are able to sell on the market an increasing share of their production. It should be noted that everything is relative in Cuba and the standard of living and the infrastructure lag far behind its potential and/or its place in the Caribbean compared to where it was 40 years ago.

In a conversation with the Chairman of the National Assembly's Foreign Relations Committee, the delegation raised the question of the restoration of confiscated properties and asked if there were any movement within the Cuban Government to address this issue. The Chairman said that, under the law nationalizing property, every country has been paid except the United States. He stated that Cuba was prepared to discuss settlement of the property. The problem is the retroactivity of the Helms-Burton Act which gives the right to Cuban citizens, who have been nationalized as Americans, to claim property with the help of the U.S. Government. It would cost the Cuban Government over \$6 billion, an amount beyond their capabilities. The delegation asked whether a third party—possibly a Latin American country—might serve as an arbitrator to resolve these claims.

Cuban Comments about the Helms-Burton Act

During discussions in Havana with non-official Cubans, the delegation raised the question of U.S. policy with specific reference to the Helms-Burton Act. The delegation said that political realities in the United States suggest that the Helms-Burton Act will remain in place for the foreseeable future and planning should be developed with this reality in mind. It should be recorded, however that most of those queried argued in favor of a basic change in the Helms-Burton Act. For example, the Catholic Church, echoing the

Pope, urged that the embargo be terminated. Western businessmen thought that the future was discernible, economic prospects were encouraging and the United States should decide if it were to be a player or not. The U.S. embargo, at this juncture, was a strong moral statement and *de facto* it aided foreign business access. They did not understand why the United States did not want to be a player in Cuba's future which could be better achieved with normal economic and social relations.

Dissident and NGO representatives took particular exception to the way in which the Helms-Burton Act and the recent Presidential announcements have been wrapped in a rhetorical package which has the effect of labeling all efforts to build "civil society" as a move to overthrow Castro. As one Western NGO representative said, the NGOs are identified as tools of subversion against Castro and this backfires on the NGOs. The dissidents are, to some degree, divided. The majority believe that the Helms-Burton Act gives Castro an excuse for everything that goes wrong in Cuba and by lifting it, the world (and the Cuban people) could see the bad management, corruption and failure of the Cuban regime. Several said, however, that modification of the embargo would need to be made in a way that does not take the pressure off Castro.

Policy formulations need to reflect sensitivity to the Cuban mind set. Even men-on-the-street Cubans have some support for Cuban nationalism, as distinct from Castro's regime. Dissidents repeated a view heard in several circles that they were concerned about substituting Miami for Havana. They would like to participate in democratic change and welcome close relations with the United States, they do not want foreign dominance which played too large a part in their past.

In sum, the delegation recognizes that Cuba remains a repressive society, but believes that the state system will undergo major changes after Castro dies. The experiences reflected in the many transitions that have taken place in the past ten years in Central and East Europe, as well as the states formerly composing the USSR, indicate that changes can take many different directions ranging from democracy to domestic instability to authoritarianism. It is in both the Cuban and U.S. national interest to encourage peaceful evolution to an open society. The delegation believes steps should be initiated to reduce Cuba's isolation and to communicate with many different elements of Cuban society. Further, pain and suffering on the island should be eased through humanitarian support, particularly in the areas of food and medicine. The delegation does not believe it either politically possible to challenge the Helms-Burton Act, nor does it believe it is warranted in light of continued political oppression by Castro, but further practical policy and program steps are possible during this interim phase of history.

Food and Agriculture

The delegation favors unrestricted sales of food and agricultural equipment. Food sales and gifts do not strengthen Castro. They may give him a limited propaganda stick, but they give the Cuban people food.

The policy announced by the White House on January 5, 1999 on food sales places a very sharply focused emphasis on the independent agricultural sector in Cuba. The language of the announcement is unnecessarily circumscribed and the potential benefit of this policy initiative will be effected by the manner in which the implementing regulations are drafted. Very restrictive drafting could make this initiative virtually meaningless. The delegation observed food shortages and

is aware that supply is very tight in Cuba. It believes that the sales of food and equipment to independent nongovernmental entities is desirable and should be pressed where practicable. It should not be restrictive. The delegation does not favor sales at subsidized concessionary rates—no U.S. Government underwriting should be engaged in these transactions. Even if one works through the state trading system, the food will still reach the Cuban people—and the ultimate purpose is to help the Cuban people—even if some of the cash proceeds end up with the Cuban Government. Realistically speaking that is where most of the remittances sent by Cuban-Americans to their families ultimately end up. The delegation believes that gifts of food to needy persons and groups should be continued through responsible humanitarian channels, such as Caritas. Such gifts do benefit directly the Cuban people.

The delegation used the January 5 policy statement as a starting point for discussions on this subject with Cuban officials and with representatives from the private sector, foreign and domestic. A number of important points emerged in these conversations.

A large number of Cubans are defined as "independent" by the Cuban Government and by Western businessmen and NGO representatives. The key is how to define the so-called independent farmers who are in cooperatives where the land is owned by the state but who, after meeting a production quota for the state, have the freedom to sell their own produce. These farmers need enhanced fertilizers, pesticides and equipment, but they have a serious cash shortfall. There is a skepticism in Cuba as to whether these "private" farmers will be able to buy many supplies and equipment. For this proposal to have any positive impact, it is essential to have a broad rather than a legalistic interpretation of what is an independent farmer.

The establishment of at least a quasi-independent agricultural sector is key to the success of the policy and it will be necessary to design creative ways to sell agricultural supplies. The implementers of the policy should be flexible and should consider the development of agricultural machinery cooperatives to service many farms and/or independent farmers. Caritas currently is developing an agricultural project in conjunction with the semi-official Association of Small Farmers (ANEP). Under this project, the feed, fertilizer and equipment purchases are made through a state enterprise, but an agreement is made that the farmers, who actually make the purchases, will be able to sell a portion of the produce on the private market. This is a constructive and realistic approach as it does not attempt to circumvent the Cuban Government, which would not work in this situation, but finds a formula that develops a *quid pro quo* by operating, at least in part, through the Cuban foreign trade system.

Other arrangements paralleling this pilot should be possible and might be of interest to certain U.S. agricultural companies. The feed, fertilizer and equipment purchases by farmers are facilitated by funds provided by Caritas. U.S. agricultural firms, if they become involved, initially would need to play a similar charitable role.

The policy of supporting the gifts of food should continue. Representatives of charitable organizations, such as Caritas maintain that the receipt of food as gifts is easier for them to handle than the purchase of food supplies. They have negotiated arrangements with the Cuban Government to verify the majority of its distributions of humanitarian assistance—food and medicine, but it will not be possible to replicate the same process if these supplies were to be bought by Caritas. Even under current arrangements,

Caritas has to engage in extensive negotiations with the Cuban Government regarding each shipment received.

Medicines and Medical Supplies

U.S. policy should be to eliminate all restrictions on the sale and/or free distribution of medicines and medical supplies.

The current program, supported primarily by Caritas but also by several other international NGOs, has developed an extensive distribution system to over 100 hospitals throughout the country. In consultation with the Cuban Government, a viable system of monitoring the distribution of the medicines and insuring that they are used for the purposes intended has been established. Caritas prefers to receive medicines and medical supplies as gifts. From their operational point of view, purchases would necessitate establishing an artificial and counterproductive process. Outside charities, primarily the Catholic Relief Service, would need to supply the funds to make the purchases. Caritas then would need to work through the Cuban foreign trade system to gain access to the goods and to arrange procedures for further sales and/or distribution. Regardless of what happens vis-a-vis sales, medical gifts should continue to be supplied to Cuba via Caritas and other NGOs.

The issue of sales is extremely complicated. Officials in the Castro Government repeatedly stated that they are prepared to buy medicinal drugs but the process is hindered by the regulatory maze imposed upon the Cuban Government and Western pharmaceutical companies. In addition, they allege that the United States does not respond to specific requests. The delegation is aware that U.S. spokesmen, both at the U.S. Interests Section and in the Department of State, believe that the United States has removed all impediments, that the licensing process is straight forward for U.S. pharmaceutical companies and that, in the last analysis, the Cuban Government either does not have the funds to make the purchases or for political reasons does not want to make the purchases. In a personal meeting with National Assembly President Ricardo Alarcon, the delegation requested that the Cubans provide specific examples where the Cubans have sought medicines or medical supplies and the U.S. Government has been an obstacle.

While a protracted argument could take place as to whether there is a bureaucratic problem from the U.S. side, the delegation believes this is not the basic issue. All restrictions should be lifted for the sale of medicines and medical equipment. The delegation does not believe that this will result in any particular economic or political gain for Castro, but it could help the Cuban people. Without being too quick to judge, the delegation believes the threat of medicines and medical supplies being diverted for "apartheid medical treatment" has been somewhat overstated. It would appear that at least some of these cases are for specialized treatment and may not be competing for resources that could go to the local population. While the delegation members do not accept at face value the more modest numbers that the Cubans say are treated this way nor the protestation that all such revenues go into the Cuban medical system, they do believe that, in the main, increased medicines and medical supplies will have positive benefits to the Cuban people. This is one of the policy objectives of the delegation.

An alternative would be to simplify the regulatory process from the U.S. side by reworking the key control paper, the "Guidelines of Sales and Donations for Medicines and Medical Supplies to Cuba." In discussions, Paragraph 24 appeared to be a particularly troubling paragraph. This will, inter-

alia, make it easier for pharmaceutical companies and make the Cuban market somewhat less bureaucratic and potentially more attractive.

Under any circumstance, the delegation believes consideration should be given to establishing a general license for donations and sales of medicines and medical supplies to non-governmental organizations and humanitarian institutions, such as hospitals. The delegation suggests, if the alternative were pursued, that a general license be developed outlining a few basics including: where the medicine is going; types of people for whom intended; certification from the sending/receiving organization of us. Consideration should be given to identifying a U.S. purchasing agent who could serve as an expeditor and independent bridge between the U.S. pharmaceutical firms and Cuban "customers" to expedite sales and monitor delivery.

The delegation does not accept the statement that the impact of the embargo has severely harmed the Cuban health system, as argued by Castro's spokesmen, but accepts the fact of shortages. Further, it is recognized that U.S. policy does make the purchase of materials for U.S. producers more difficult. The procedure now in place is sufficiently cumbersome and bureaucratic resulting in diminishing interest in the U.S. companies selling to Cuba. A particular problem is the acquisition in the United States of spare parts, a very specialized need that a purchasing agent could help solve. The U.S. Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) needs to examine how money transfers of sales can be expedited. The licensing process must be made unambiguous and clear.

Under current circumstances, the bulk of the deliveries of food and medicines are handled today by the Catholic Relief Services. With the new executive actions in Washington, additional suppliers may increase their assistance and/or sales. Means of access to Cuba remain limited. Although the Administration has suggested that licensed goods could be eligible for transit on charter flight, the delegation has recommended steps be taken to permit more direct transportation, including by DHL, UPS or other air shippers and by U.S. ships that could be authorized—without penalty—to make Cuban port calls. The current system that requires Caritas to haul medicines, medical supplies and food from U.S. points of collection—particularly from Florida sources—to Canada for shipment to Havana verge on the absurd.

Remittances

Remittances are an extremely valuable support mechanism for the Cuban people. They should be supported not only for delivery to individual Cubans but also to independent humanitarian organizations. I should be recognized that the ultimate beneficiaries will be both the individual recipients and the Cuban Government. Such funds will be used to meet basic human needs. The purchase of necessary items in Cuba will result in some portion of the cash remittances flowing into state controlled economic outlets. In this sense, Castro does make some gains. Nevertheless, the delegation believes this is a very important step not only to help Cuban citizens but also to start the economic enfranchisement of a larger number of Cubans.

According to information received, remittances sent from Dade County can not go directly to the Western Union office in Havana. If true, this restriction should be lifted, as it would facilitate remittances and be less costly for the sender.

Counter Narcotics Programs

The delegation has not listed this issue as a recommendation because the facts con-

cerning the recent report of Cuban drug running by the Colombian police at the port of Cartagena are not clear. During the visit, the delegation raised the drug question with the Foreign Ministry and it was, in turn, raised with the delegation by the Minister of Justice, who is the Chair of the Cuban National Commission on Drugs. The delegation believes that, at the appropriate moment, a more energetic effort should be made to test Cuban willingness to engage in counter-narcotics programs. U.S. representatives have proposed an experts meeting to discuss specifics as a preface to any formal agreement. The delegation understands the importance of proceeding on a step-by-step basis but believes that the United States should be flexible in its approach to this issue. The recent crackdown against prostitutes, drug pushers and crime in Havana is an indication that Castro recognizes that steps are necessary to stop drugs. The United States should seek the right time to introduce an agenda item that is in the best interests of both countries. The Cubans have indicated interest in a formal agreement and U.S. officials could present this as a bargaining chip. There may be some value in considering Caribbean narcotics flows in a broader multinational context as well.

Environmental Cooperation

A number of environmental issues could be the basis for cooperation. The delegation focused on one specific issue during the January visit: the pollution of the Gulf of Mexico and states such as Florida adjoining the Gulfstream caused by raw sewage pouring into the Gulf from Havana and under north shore sites. A number of scientific studies are being considered and/or are underway examining pollution issues in the Gulf, including near Cuba. The delegation believes this subject requires further study with the purpose of determining whether an action plan can be crafted of mutual interest to the United States and to Cuba.

Radio

The political dissidents as well as several Cubans with whom the delegation had chance encounters in the countryside said Radio Marti was an important medium. An independent journalist said he and his colleagues regularly passed stories to Radio Marti and it was the biggest "megaphone" for their articles. Nevertheless, the delegation received considerable criticism about Radio Marti's program content. As one dissident said, "Radio Marti does not need to belabor the Cuban people with what is wrong in Cuba. We live here. We know that." There was also a frustration, by a leading human rights activist, that the "people who went to Miami do not speak for Cubans and should not dominate the radio." Another said the radio was unnecessarily polemical.

There was interest in more balanced news and commentary. Listeners are anxious to have solid comprehensive reporting on world affairs, as well as comment on developments in science, the arts and other things that are of interest but from which they are cut off. They also would favor more cultural and music programs. For the second time (the first being the Association's trip in December 1996), no one in the independent sector was found who had ever seen TV Marti.

Telecommunications

The Cuban phone company ETECSA was formed as a state monopoly in 1994 and is complete controlled by the Cubans, although the Italian company, STET, has a 29 percent interest. STET and ETECSA have a 20-year concession from the Cuban Government and a 12-year exclusive concession. A target is to have the Cuban phone system "modernized" by the year 2005. Penetration levels are

about 1 telephone for 27 Cubans; the 2005 target is a 1 to 10 ratio. STET reportedly made an initial investment of \$200 million and is scheduled to send an additional \$800 million over the course of the contract. The funds are provided from Italy's foreign aid program; STET reportedly receives special tax considerations for this investment.

The Cuban Minister of Communications and the Director of Telecommunications expressed a strong interest in more foreign investments in all areas of telecommunications. They are, however, reluctant to give the citizens complete access to Internet. As an example, while cellular phones are being developed under the rubric CUBACEL with a Mexican partner, security concerns significantly have slowed this effort.

Castro and his Minister of Interior have succeeded in implementing a program of very tight control of Cuba's access to the Internet and are opposed to expanding the telecommunications sector and Internet. The Cubans also completely control the Internet server provider (ISP). The Cubans have an intra-island Internet with which university-approved people and others have access. In addition, there are several Internet sites within Cuba which are available. In terms of international Internet, individual Cubans can access only those sites approved for them. For example, a medical university may have access to certain medical sites, but each is encrypted, monitored and recorded.

At the same time, the rapid technical advances in the world telecommunications industry create a serious dilemma for the Cuban regime. They need to have their key people on Internet for scientific and educational reasons, but are hesitant to grant unlimited access. To restrict this, they have worked with a German encryption and monitoring firm to keep track of "who does what" on Internet in Cuba. The Castro regime is making a strong effort to record all e-mail and all other computer transmissions. The delegation was advised that while Cubans now eagerly exchange e-mail transmissions—each delegation member received calling cards with e-mail addresses—all e-mail is monitored and recorded through one central server. While Cuban officials would not acknowledge this, the delegation was advised that only about 200 Cubans have complete, unfettered access to the Internet. *The Cuban government has not resolved the basic conflict of how it can aspire to being a modern technological state without allowing more of its people access to the complete international Internet.* With technological advances proceeding to mind-numbing speed, it is reasonable to assume that Castro will not be able to deter major information flows arriving in Cuba. It should be U.S. policy to foster this information revolution.

There is, however, an immediate threat to expanding telecommunications links to Cuba stemming from a decision by a U.S. District Court to award \$187 million in damages to the families of the aborted 1996 "Brothers to the rescue" mission. These funds are frozen Cuban assets in the United States. The Cubans have threatened that if these assets are seized that they would cut direct telephone service between the United States and Cuba. This would clearly set back the many faceted opportunities that are just now emerging in terms of telecommunication links to Cuba and the provision of a rich and diversified body of information to the Cuban people. Such action would neither be in U.S. national interests nor helpful to Cuban citizens.

Vignettes and Personal Experiences

The delegation's strong endorsement for a more simplified system by which Americans can travel to Cuba is founded on personal ex-

perience. Armed with all necessary travel documents—from the Department of Treasury (OFAC) and from the Cuban Government (a visa)—the delegation sought the simplest and most direct travel route. All options were explored. Direct Miami charter flights were the first option. Only four flights were scheduled per week—now it is up to 11 and rising—with three leaving Miami at 8:00 in the morning with a requested check in time of 3:00 a.m. Logistics, red-tape and over bookings prompted the concerned travel agency to recommend close attention to the recommended check-in time. At the time of request, flights only went on Monday, Friday and Saturday. Aside from the fact that the delegation was scheduled to fly on a Sunday, no seats were available for Saturday or Monday. The delegation passed up this option, made available by the March 20 Presidential action, and traveled from Miami to Cancun, changed planes and flew onward to Havana. The elapsed time from Washington was nine hours. The return was a similar nine hours. This is not an efficient system and totally unnecessary. Of more importance than the delegation's inconvenience is that this type of an awkward system impacts negatively on expanded travel between the two countries, as called for in the January 5 declaration.

The 50,000 seat baseball stadium is an excellent place to meet Cubans in an informal basis. There is much congeniality and beer drinking in the stands. The four cent seat price makes the fight about the exhibition game revenues for the home game with Baltimore an absurdity. Even if the price is tripled for the game, the gate receipts in Cuba will be minimal.

The delegation visited Pinar del Rio Province, the capital by the same name and the small town of Vinales. The visit was undertaken in an unstructured and unofficial capacity and in a relaxed atmosphere. Although the following comments appear random, they do provide a general commentary concerning conditions, as seen by the delegation.

The delegation learned that bookings for the bus from Vinales to Havana during the time of the Pope's visit were made many days in advance and could not meet the demand. The Government found eight extra buses from somewhere and each was filled for the trip to Havana to see the Pope. The Catholic Church in Vinales has grown some since the Pope's visit, although now only has a congregation of 50 persons. There is a Spanish priest assigned to Vinales. Several delegates walked into the cultural center and were briefed by a bilingual Cuban program director who welcomed the chance to show his center to Americans. Responding to a delegation suggestion, the Cuban program director took three delegation members into a computer center where four computers were being used by ten year olds in an after school program. Such computer training is integrated into school activities. The group also visited a repair center where all sorts of electronic equipment—TV, radio, computers—were being repaired. When spare parts did not exist, they were being created. Several of the young service men in the electronics shop had engineering degrees and one also had a CPA and business degree. Several of the Cuban technicians accepted the delegation's invitation for a further discussion in a local bar where an active exchange occurred. As an example of progress. As one example of progress beer which was largely imported several years ago, now is produced in Cuba and at each restaurant visited, Cuban beer was sold. It is competitive in quality to the various imported beers.

The young technicians described that each had or would have compulsory military service: two years are required if the Cuban has

had no college training and one year, if college educated. One of the engineers said That he was living in a house given him by the government that was empty but had been the house of a Cuban now in exile. He did not want to give up his house—the exiles are history, he said.

The young men thought that conditions were better now than in 1991, a theme heard repeated in several other informal conversations. In the country, the people neither look downtrodden or undernourished. Tourism has helped. They all listen to Radio Marti but do not find it interesting; the radio appears to assume the listeners are stupid. They would prefer music and real news. The delegation offered the Cubans an opportunity to ask questions and the young men responded with tough questions about Vietnam, Iraq, Israel and Impeachment. After two hours of open dialogue during which no animosity to Americans was displayed, they expressed their appreciation for the candid talk because they only receive one side of the news and they wanted to hear the American side.

Despite the appearance of more goods in the countryside, an arrival of a shipment of shoes at a local store in the Pinar del Rio capital city resulted in a mad scramble by the local citizens to buy new inexpensive shoes. This suggests a certain lack of everyday clothing in that provincial center. At the same time, the pharmacy was stocked fully with medicines and a hardware store had all the needed paint and building supplies that one would see in an American suburb—the only problem is that only licensed people could buy in this store.

Driving to Pinar del Rio from Havana demonstrated the shortage of transportation. Individuals or groups waited along the road—much of the 80 mile stretch—for a lift. Buses are infrequent and always filled to capacity. Open-back trucks always could be seen hauling between 3 to 20 people. It is the law to stop to collect passengers. Police check points were every 10 to 15 miles. In the Pinar del Rio area and in Vinales, a town eight kilometers away, the principal means of transportation was bicycle, although walking and hitchhiking were very popular "modes of transportation." An occasional car, or an even less frequently old decrepit Soviet tractor would be seen.

An interesting footnote: Che is the national ikon. Handsome dashing portraits, T-shirts and other reproductions of a chic 32 year old revolutionary cult figure abound. No personality cult of Castro is evident.

The delegation was advised by Church figures that the high abortion rates were primarily a result of poverty and used as population control.

A spontaneous stop at a tobacco farm was very revealing. The farm was totally self-sufficient. A family of at least three, possibly four generations, all living under one roof—with no electricity, indoor plumbing or telephone—yet all appeared healthy and happy. The nine children (in all age groups) were well dressed and engaged actively in school. Beginning in fifth grade, many students learn English and they practice their new skills on the Association visitors. They were positive about their education and free medical treatment. A doctor visits to the house whenever needed. The delegation was told that "Fidel not only helps the Cubans but gives medicines and doctors to the world." The farm is a family operation. Pesticides are state supplied and the land is owned by the government. Wood plows are pulled by cattle or oxen. Tobacco production netted the farmer visited about \$113 per year, but he and his family accepted their existence. It is easy to overstate need when our finds subsistence farmers who can care for themselves, have the basics and have education

and medicine provided. One would think the young students would receive a broader perspective through their educational experience, but it was not immediately apparent in a short visit.

A Final Note

The delegation believes that the contacts developed, the on-the-ground discussions and general observations have provided each of the members with valuable insights into Cuban realities. The delegation members will seek to contribute their views to the public debate concerning U.S. policy to Cuba. The bipartisan quality of the group, its liberal to conservative construction, and its ability to be one step removed from direct domestic political pressure may permit the group as a whole, and individuals speaking from the basis of their own unique insights, to contribute to a greater national understanding of this critical subject. The time is right for such a discussion.

Representative Louis Frey, Jr., Republican-Florida (1969-1979), Chairman of Delegation; Senator Dennis DeConcini, Democrat-Arizona (1977-1995); Senator Robert Kasten, Republican-Wisconsin, House 1975-1979; Senate 1981-1993; Senator Larry Pressler, Republican-South Dakota (1979-1997); Representative Alan Wheat, Democrat-Missouri (1983-1999); February 22, 1999.

SCHEDULE OF CUBAN PROGRAM ACTIVITY, 10-16 JANUARY 1999

Sunday 10 January

10:15 PM: Arrive Joe Marti International Airport (Havana), via Miami and Cancun. Welcome by Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs official Raul Averhoff.

Monday 11 January

10:00 AM: Roundtable with MPs of the National Assembly, chaired by Jorge Lezcano Perez, Chairman of the International Relations Commission. Three other MPs participated including Ramon Pex Ferro, Vice Chair of the International Relations Commission and Jose Luis Toledo Santander who is also the Dean of the Law School at Havana University. The roundtable also included Miguel Alvarez, Advisor to the President of the Parliament and Julio Espinosa, the Coordinator General of the International Relations Commission.

11:30 AM: Meeting with Roland Suarez, Director, Caritas Cubana.

1:00 PM: Visit to Havana City Planning Office with briefing by Director Mario Coyula Cowley.

2:30 PM: Meeting with Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Carlos Fernandez de Cossio.

4:00 PM: Meeting with Papal Nuncio Benjamino Stella at the Residence of the Apostolic Nuncio.

7:00 PM: Dinner at a Paladares.

Tuesday 12 January

8:15 AM: Breakfast with Western journalists including representatives or stringers representing CNN, ABC, BBC, US News and World Report, Sun Sentinel and Clarin.

9:30 AM: Meeting with Jose L. Rodriguez, Minister of Economy and Planning.

11:00 AM: Visit to the William Soler Children's Hospital. Briefed by Dr. Diana Martinez, Director; Ramond E. Diaz, Deputy Minister of Health and Dr. Paulino Nunez Castanon, cardiovascular surgeon.

12:30 PM: Luncheon with Western businessmen hosted by US Interests Section Principal Officer Mike Kozak, including Konrad Hieber (Mercedes Benz), Ian Wetman (Caribbean Finance Investments, Ltd), Hans Keyser, (Danish Consul) and Jan Willem Bitter (Dutch international lawyer).

4:00 PM: Meeting with Miguel Figueras, Advisor to the Minister, Ministry for Foreign Investment and Economic Cooperation.

5:30 PM: Discussion at US Deputy Chief of Mission John Boardman's residence with diplomatic representatives from Portugal, France, the UK, Italy, Sweden, Spain, Germany and the Netherlands.

8:00 PM: Baseball game at Latinoamericano Stadium.

10:00 PM: Dinner at Hemingway favorite—Bodega del Medio.

Wednesday 13 January

9:30 AM: Tour of historical sites of Old Havana, inspected docks and terminals for cruise ships, informal discussions and conversations in old city.

12:30 PM: Luncheon with independent democrats in local restaurant.

2:30 PM: Visit and tour of Carlos J. Finlay Institute (split delegation).

3:00 PM: Tea with independent journalists (split delegation).

5:00 PM: Meeting with Robert Diaz Sotolongo, Minister of Justice.

7:00 PM: Reception at US Interest Section residence in honor of three visiting US groups including students, university officials and cultural groups.

Thursday 14 January

Day trip to Pinar del Rio and Vinales. Series of impromptu meetings with a broad cross range of local citizens, including sugar farmers, church attendants, computer technicians, engineers and store keepers.

Friday 15 January

AM: Free time in Havana. An opportunity to see shops, small craft stores and museums.

12:00 noon: Briefing at US Interests Section by Mike Kozak and a cross-section of mission officers.

3:00 PM: Meeting with Minister of Communications Silvano Colas Sanchez, Vice Minister Oswaldo Mas Pelaez and Director of Telecommunications Hornedo Rodriguez Gonzalez (partial delegation).

5:00 PM: Meeting with Oxfam/Canada representatives.

7:00 PM: Meeting with National Assembly President Ricardo Alarcon and the group of parliamentarians who met the delegation on Monday 11 January.

Saturday 16 January

7:15 AM: Depart Havana by air to Cancun enroute to Miami, Orlando and Washington.

REPORT OF STUDY TOUR TO VIETNAM OCTOBER 8-14, 1998

(By Louis Frey, Jr., Immediate Past President)

INTRODUCTION

A delegation of former Members of Congress, their spouses and guests visited Vietnam from Thursday, October 8 through Wednesday, October 14, 1998. The delegation included: former Representative Robert Daniel and Linda Daniel, former Representative Louis Frey and Marcia Frey, former Senator Chic Hecht, former Representative Shirley Pettis-Roberson and Ben Roberson, and Irene and Teryl Koch (friends of the Robersons). The group was accompanied by Edward Henry of Military Historical Tours, who arranged the visit. The trip focused on Hanoi in the northern part of Vietnam and Ho Chi Minh City in the south. Three days were spent in each area.

In Hanoi, meetings were held with: former Representative now U.S. Ambassador Pete Peterson and staff of the U.S. Embassy; representatives of the U.S. MIA office; members of the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry and Assembly; members of the American-Vietnamese Friendship Society; the Executive Vice President of the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce; local business leaders; and Tom Donohue, President of the American Cham-

ber of Commerce, who was speaking in Hanoi.

In Ho Chi Minh City, the delegation met with: American and Vietnamese business leaders, bankers and lawyers; staff of the U.S. Consulate; members of the American Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam; an American hotel manager; Vice Chairman of the Red Cross in Vietnam; head of the International Relations Department at the Vietnam National University; and the publisher of a major Ho Chi Minh City newspaper. Time also was provided to visit the cultural and war museum and to observe Vietnamese people and their lifestyle in everyday settings. In addition, trips were taken outside the city to the Delta area and the Mekong River, to small villages that produced pottery and to an industrial area that had factories producing, among other items, Nike shoes.

A list of people the delegation met in Vietnam is appended to this report.

OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

Vietnam is a difficult country to understand. There is no question that it is a poor Third World country, with minimal infrastructure and tremendous economic problems. It is, in many ways, a land of contrasts.

It has a Communist government, whose importance seems to diminish the farther one goes into the countryside or the farther one is from Hanoi.

The average yearly income in the North is U.S. \$300; in the south it is U.S. \$1,000. However, a great many people in Vietnam own motorbikes that cost from U.S. \$1,000 to U.S. \$2,500. Obviously, there is a large underground economy.

The Vietnamese seem to want foreign investment, especially from the United States, but the many rules, huge bureaucracy and corruption send out a difference message. There is relatively little investment from the United States and very little U.S. aid of any kind. Vietnam probably is five to ten years away from being attractive to many foreign investors, although the large number of literate workers and the very low pay scale have attracted some companies.

Despite the poverty, most people have the basic essentials, such as food (rice) and minimal housing. While there is dissatisfaction, the economic problems appear to be accepted as a normal part of life.

Sixty percent of the population is 26 years of age or under; 80 percent is under the age of 40.

The Vietnamese are working to establish a banking and legal system, and are attempting to privatize basic industries.

Government representatives are cooperating with the U.S. Embassy and the U.S. MIA office to identify the remains of the 1,564 Americans still missing in action.

Vietnam is the fourth largest country in Southeast Asia (77 million people), but seems to be a low priority in terms of U.S. foreign policy. It appears that a small amount of interest, exchange programs and aid money could go a long way in building relations with a country that, despite the war, does not harbor strong anti-U.S. feelings.

U.S. EMBASSY BRIEFING

Ambassador Peterson assembled all the key members of his staff to brief the delegation. The Ambassador indicated at the beginning that one of the primary missions of the Embassy is to find any Vietnam veterans who are alive, or the remains of the MIAs. They have found 50 sets of remains in the last 17 months that have been repatriated to the United States. There are 1,564 Americans missing in Vietnam, 2,081 in Southeast Asia. The U.S. MIA office has concentrated on 196 cases that are called "last known alive

cases." They have reduced these cases to 43. U.S. volunteers go to Vietnam periodically to help excavate crash sites. Young people from Vietnam and the United States do much of the work. Ambassador Peterson said he is proud of the job that is being done. He said the United States also aids Vietnam in identifying their missing. The Vietnamese have over 300,000 MIAs, a fact which the Ambassador believes is not generally recognized. It is important that the veteran groups in the United States understand what is being done. At the present time, it appears there is a split in the veteran groups regarding the effectiveness of this process. There is no question in the Ambassador's mind that this is the number one priority, and that it must be resolved satisfactorily before the United States can move ahead in other areas with Vietnam. As Ambassador Peterson stated, "Never before in the history of mankind has any nation done what we are doing. The efforts of the Joint Task Force Full Accounting to honor the U.S. commitment to our unaccounted-for comrades, their families and the nation are unprecedented."

The Political Counselor has four officers. The main thrust in the political area is on human rights in an attempt to move the Vietnamese in the right direction and encourage them to initiate people-to-people programs. The problems created by Agent Orange still are talked about and must be addressed. Environmental matters also are being discussed with Vietnamese officials. Vietnam does not have a nuclear power plant, although apparently they want such a facility. The Vietnamese want many high-tech items, but do not have training even on the basics.

Embassy officials stated that there basically is no aid program in Vietnam, but suggested that the United States should help economically and work to keep Vietnam healthy. Major responsibilities of the Economic Counselor are to promote U.S. exports to Vietnam and to arrange trade shows and missions. Three economic officers are working on the trade agreement, which is the key to U.S.-Vietnamese economic relations. Limited progress has been made so far. The copyright agreement is completed, and a narcotics agreement is in process.

The Vietnamese are working on economic reforms and are attempting to improve the legal code. They are trying to convert from a government-controlled economy to a market economy and to encourage the private sector and discourage state-owned businesses. However, many of the major industries, such as telephone and electricity, still are state-owned. Vietnam has a graduated income tax system with 10 percent tax on the first U.S. \$200, 20 percent on the first U.S. \$500 and 25 percent on all income over U.S. \$10,000. Because of the underground economy, many people do not pay taxes. There also is a sales tax.

Agriculture is the major industry in Vietnam, with 80 percent of the people involved. They need help with genetics, bulk feed and livestock. Agricultural research can help, especially in the soybean area. Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS) sponsors a program that has brought 32 Vietnamese to the United States to learn more about agriculture. The state of Florida is reviewing the possibility of opening an office in Vietnam and initiating a college extension program. Land has been returned to the farmers, but in typical communist fashion, i.e., they own the land, but they do not. Land can be passed on to family members and apparently be leased for up to 40 years, but the state still owns the land.

The Consular Office handles the normal jobs of overseeing U.S. citizens and helping with passports and visas. This section has 11 full-time U.S. employees and six part-time

local employees. They deal with many non-immigrant visas, mostly for students. They also handle health issues. Medical needs are basic, such as latex gloves, clean sheets and sterile items. The health care system is poor, with little sanitation. If an Embassy staff member has a broken bone or a serious ailment, he or she must leave the country for care.

The Embassy is located in a nine-story building that resembles a mine shaft, it has one elevator that does not always work. The Ambassador would like to have a different or new Embassy.

The Ambassador concluded the briefing by stating that there are few U.S. exchange programs and that the United States could do more in Vietnam. He believes it is in the U.S. interest to keep the population healthy and educated. The bottom line is that Ambassador Peterson thinks progress is being made and that, in ten years, the U.S. relationship with Vietnam should be as strong as it presently is with South Korea.

Vietnam Government Meetings

The Vietnam Assembly, which has 450 Members, began in 1956 with a single house. Assembly Members meet twice per year for one month. There is a standing committee that conducts business when the Assembly is out of session. There are 120 female Members (26.7 percent), which they claim is one of the six best percentages of female representation in the world. There are 54 ethnic groups represented in the Assembly. Vietnam has 61 provinces, each of which is represented by five Members. In addition, there are Members who are former South Vietnamese military officers. Assembly Members stated that there is a great deal of discussion and dissension within the Assembly, and that it is not a rubber stamp for the government. Recommendations by the government have been defeated. Assembly Members are nominated by the national party, but the commune villages or trade unions can reject them. It is interesting that, even in Vietnam, all politics truly are local.

The Vice President of Vietnam is a woman. Fifty-four percent of the population is female. Women head 16 percent of the 40,000 businesses in Vietnam. This particularly is interesting because Confucianism does not accept women as equal. However, Vietnam was influenced by Ho Chi Minh, who declared equality between the sexes and had that fact written into the 1945 Constitution.

Education is important in Vietnam. Vietnamese government officials stated that there is a literacy rate of 90 percent, with 87 percent of the female population being literate.

The head of the Vietnam-U.S. Friendship Society (Viet My Society) is a woman who is a seasoned political veteran. She personally feels friendship with the United States even though her son was born in a shelter during the U.S. bombing raids in 1972. She believes that most people in the United States do not understand Vietnam. They have a wartime vision of Vietnam that has long since changed. In the delegation's opinion, this is an accurate observation. She believes that the U.S. veteran groups visiting Vietnam are helpful, as they personally have the opportunity to see a different and new Vietnam. It is interesting to note that many of her complaints are the same as those of politicians and voters in the United States, e.g., that there is not enough money in the budget for education—only 15 percent, that environmental problems are great and that the situation is one of the industrialist versus the environmentalist.

Vietnamese government officials stated that the population growth rate is 2.1 percent. However, it does not appear that there

is any population control. In the villages, everyone wants a male child, so many families have three, four or five children until they have a son. Confucianism teaches that the job of the man is to take care of the woman. For instance, the father takes care of a daughter until she is married. Then the husband takes care of his wife until the husband dies. Then it is the job of the son to take care of his mother. As one Vietnamese said regarding birth control, one of the problems is that in rural areas there is no television or radio. People go to bed early and do not have much else to do.

There is a tremendous problem with unemployment in Vietnam, especially as the young population ages. The government states that the unemployment rate is 6.7 percent and that the underemployment rate is 36 percent. Inflation several years ago in Vietnam was 775 percent, but was down to 3.6 percent in 1997. The Vietnamese government has issued 4,200 licenses for foreign investment. Officials stated that domestic saving has increased to 20 percent of the GDP. The GDP had a growth rate of seven to nine percent between 1991 and 1997. The problems in Asia have slowed this growth rate down to a reported 6.4 percent during the first half of 1998. Observing what is happening in Vietnam, one questions these figures. The officials were honest when they said that economic reform and political reform are necessary. They indicated that it is essential to establish a rule of law and to streamline the government apparatus. They also demonstrated how a poor infrastructure and inadequate competition between their industries have stifled growth. They have the same concern that exists in many parts of the world with the tremendous gap between the few rich and the many poor. Their goal is to privatize over 1,503 presently state owned enterprises by 2002. The economic slowdown has caused them to suspend some major projects, such as highways that require a great deal of capital.

There is a drug problem in Vietnam, mainly heroin and cocaine. The government believes that the answer is education, and they rely on families to solve the problem. Of course, they claim that drugs are not much of a problem, but admit usage is growing.

In Vietnam, a welfare system basically is nonexistent. The government will give money to help, i.e., to buy a pig to start a farm or buy some tools to help start a trade, but there is no welfare payment for food or housing. Officials' main complaint is that there is not much U.S. investment—only \$1 billion—which ranks it eighth in the world in terms of foreign investment in Vietnam. A minor irritation is that Vietnamese business representatives are having problems receiving visas from the U.S. Embassy.

The Vietnamese are proud of their policy of independence. They stated that they want to have peaceful cooperation with every region of the world. They presently have friendly relations with 167 countries and diplomatic relations with 120 countries, including Russia, the United States, China and Japan. The Vietnamese are making serious efforts to promote friendship and cooperation in Asia and will host the Sixth Asian Summit in 1999 in Hanoi. Vietnam also will be a full member of APEC in 1999. There are historical problems with China, including land-related problems which they indicated should be solved by the year 2000. In addition, there are disputes over islands in the South China Sea. These problems extend beyond China to Malaysia and other Southeast Asian countries. Vietnam has agreed to settle these problems peacefully, without the use of force.

Their trade with China of \$1 billion is about equivalent to their trade with the

United States. They hope to improve their relations with the major powers in the world and want to become a member of the World Trade Organization. The Vietnamese have established a consulate in San Francisco and are hoping that the current modest trade with the United States will increase. They also hope that direct U.S. investment will grow from the 70 projects that presently are underway. Specifically, they desire U.S. investment in oil exploration, computers and food processing. Their focus is on improving internal economics and normalizing trade with the United States, putting the war in the past. All Vietnamese officials concur that they need a trade agreement with the United States, as the 40 percent tariff imposed by the United States hurts Vietnam-U.S. trade.

Vietnamese officials claim that military spending, which is a government secret, is reasonable. The delegation attempted to discover what "reasonable" meant, and the best conclusion was that it was somewhere between 30 and 40 percent of the budget.

U.S. MIA OFFICE BUILDING

One of the most important parts of the trip was the visit to the U.S. MIA office in Hanoi, called the "Ranch." The mission of the office was defined by President Ronald Reagan when he said, "I renew my pledge to the families of those listed as missing in action that this nation will work unceasingly until a full accounting is made. It is our sacred duty. We will never forget that." The MIA office coordinates and executes all U.S. DOD efforts in Vietnam to achieve the fullest possible accounting for Americans still missing as a result of the conflict in Southeast Asia. There are two ways of accomplishing this goal. The first is to return living Americans; the second is to return identifiable remains. The total number of Americans unaccounted for in Vietnam is 1,564. Of the 1,564, it has been determined that no further action will be taken in 565 cases, including many where pilots went down at sea.

The MIA office began its work at Barbers Point, Hawaii in January 1973. The MIA office in Hanoi was opened in July 1991. The Joint Task Force Full Accounting started in January 1992. There are four detachments: one located in Thailand, one in Laos, one in Cambodia and one in Hanoi headquarters, only four full-time active duty military personnel are allowed, with the commanding officer being a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army. Lt. Colonel Charles Martin, the current commander of the office, indicated that there still are 954 active cases, which would keep the office busy until 2004. (He compared this number to the 8,100 Americans lost in Korea.)

The Recovery Elements conduct jointly filed activities approximately five times per year. During a joint field activity conducted between June 23 and July 25, 1998, 50 cases were investigated in seven provinces, the research team investigated seven cases in ten provinces and there were six recovery elements where eight cases were excavated in six provinces. Another recovery activity was conducted during September 1998. From January 23, 1992 to the time of the delegation's visit, there have been 281 remains repatriated, and identifications have been completed on 104 of the 281. The Pentagon has not announced the results of a number of cases that have been sent back to Washington when identification is possible. Since January 23, 1992, there have been 97 live sighting investigations; however, the number of reports is diminishing. As the Colonel said, "Not one investigation had led to any credible evidence of a live American from the conflict in Southeast Asia being held against his will." The MIA office is now

down to the priority cases of the last known alive. They repeated what the Ambassador told the delegation that there initially were 196 individuals on this list but only 43 remain.

It is important to know that Vietnam has cooperated with the U.S. search for MIAs. The MIA office has reviewed over 28,000 documents and artifacts and has conducted 200 oral history interviews, including one with Ambassador Peterson.

HO CHI MINH AREA

Ho Chin Minh City and the south have much more energy and action than the Hanoi area. Ho Chin Minh City has seven million people, five million bicycles and three million motorcycles. Negotiating busy intersections is an incredible experience, as there are very few traffic lights. Cars are in the minority and are extremely expensive: a 1997 American car costs U.S. \$120,000. Most motorcycles are Hondas from Japan. They cost U.S. \$2,000 to \$3,000 new and U.S. \$300 to \$1,000 used. The average annual income in the south is approximately U.S. \$1,000, compared to U.S. \$300 in the north. Signs of the underground economy are everywhere, with street barbers, shops, markets and even row upon row of "Dog" restaurants.

The Chinese are predominant in the Choulam section of Ho Chin Minh City. In 1978, the Chinese population was one million. However, many Chinese were forced to leave because of the problems between Vietnam and China so that now there are approximately 500,000 Chinese in Choulam. Before 1975, the Chinese controlled the economy in the south. They still are important, especially in areas of finance and currency.

Economic problems do exist in the south. For instance, the delegation stayed in a five-star hotel, which has 21 floors but only 47 guests! A former employee of a Sheraton Hotel said that it took two years to build the hotel and everyone had been hired. Yet, the day before the opening, Sheraton decided it did not make economic sense, closed the hotel and fired all the people.

Religion is divided in the south, the same as it is in the north, with the majority being Buddhist, four to ten percent being Catholic and the remainder with no religious preference. Many believe in reincarnation. In a number of cases, a body is buried for three years in one place and then is exhumed and buried elsewhere, as they believe that the soul finally has left the body.

As explained to the delegation, there is a difference philosophically between the people in the north and the south. The people in the north live for the future. If they acquire some money, they save it or invest in land or a business. The people in the south live for today. They acquire money, spend it and do not worry about tomorrow.

Schools are terribly crowded because of the youthful population. There are three sessions of school per day. Education is free for the first six years. Then all students take an exam: if they pass, their education continues to be free; if they fail and wish to remain in school, their family must pay. In the rural areas, most students only attend school for the first six years. Since 1990, English has been the major foreign language taught. Prior to that, it was Russian. The Vietnamese believe English is easy, especially the written part. When students have completed high school, they must take an exam to continue on to university. Again, depending on how they do, university is free or they must pay.

The Vietnamese love to gamble. As you walk along the street, you seek workers sitting and playing cards. There is a daily lottery. They believe that nine is a lucky number for women and seven for men.

As mentioned previously, agriculture is the primary industry in Vietnam, with 80 percent of the population involved. In the south, they harvest three rice crops per year, in the north, two crops per year. Much of the land is fertile, as in the Mekong Delta, which has a population of 25 million in six provinces. The Mekong River is extremely long, starting in China and going 4,200 kilometers through Vietnam with nine branches flowing into the sea. The delegation visited the town of My Tho on the river, which was founded in 1618 by the Chinese and taken over by the French in late 1800s. It has a population of 150,000 with its commerce centered around the river. Further up the river, which was brown with silt, is Unicorn Island, which served as headquarters for the Vietcong during the war. The inhabitants of the island live on and by the river. They are fishermen and farmers, with three or four children to a family. This area receives 90 inches of rainfall per year. One opinion all of the delegation members had after seeing this area was how tragic it was to have put young Americans in such miserable conditions during the war.

It was interesting to see the importance of tourism. Even in the Mekong Delta, the tourist business is thriving. After a walk through the jungle, you find restaurants where you can sit and eat a decent meal. Tourism has slowed down considerably because of the Asian financial problems, but it still is important to the economy.

At a dinner in Ho Chi Minh City, the delegation had the opportunity to talk with some U.S. nationals. One of the individuals said that the Vietnamese desperately want and need U.S. technology. For instance, a Vietnamese oil well pumps 400 barrels of oil per day. Nearby, there is an oil well owned and operated by another country that pumps 4,000 barrels of oil per day. The contract the Americans have with the Vietnamese government is to pump 1,000 barrels of oil per day, which they say is easy to fulfill. All oil drilling is offshore. These Americans confirmed the statements heard before by the delegation that Vietnam is five to ten years away from much investment potential and that it is a poor, developing Third World country with a long way to go.

The Vietnamese seem to have put the war behind them. For instance, five years ago, the only job former members of the South Vietnamese army would be hired for was peddling a moped. Most of the army officers were required to go through re-education camps—the higher the rank, the longer they remained. Now, most jobs are open to everyone and there are three former South Vietnamese army officers in the Vietnam Assembly. Although this number is not large, the symbolism is important. Also, the extremely young age of the population means that many Vietnamese were not involved in nor even born during the war. The main evidence of the war is the mines and unexploded ordnance that kill at least 700 persons per year, usually farmers.

The American expatriates in Vietnam are typical, happy to be "a big fish in a small pond." Some have strong negative feelings about the war and the U.S. participation in it. One of the expatriates involved in the oil business said Vietnam does not need an oil refinery because they cannot produce enough oil for it to make economic sense, i.e., their oil reserves are relatively small when compared to other sources. He said the only reason the Vietnamese want an oil refinery is the prestige that would result internationally.

There are textile mills, cement and steel factories, with 70 percent of the invested money coming from Asia. During a visit to a Nike facility, which is a joint venture with

Korea and which employs 8,000 people, the manager said the Koreans are in Vietnam because of the low wages, which are set by the Vietnamese government. The delegation was told that the government had a problem with the Koreans four years ago and sued the management of the Nike plant over abusing workers. Korean supervisors allegedly were beating women workers, and the defense was that this was the way operations were conducted in Korea. The delegation was not allowed to enter the plant, even after repeated requests.

There are miles and miles of industrial parks in the area called Dong Nai. They look similar to U.S. industrial parks, but many of the buildings were vacant. There also is an industrial park just south of Ho Chi Minh City, which is called Saigon South and which they like to compare to Reston, Virginia. However, after two or three years, they are just beginning to entice businesses to locate in the park.

Similarly, a shopping mall (Cora) recently opened south of Ho Chi Minh City, but there were many vacant shops and few customers. Supermarkets are beginning to install electronic scanners. People must shop every day because they do not have refrigerators.

The roads, except those built by the United States, are terrible. There is road construction everywhere. The road the delegation took to the Delta was built on dikes and was very narrow, but incredibly had two-way traffic. It took close to three hours to travel 40 kilometers. There is a railroad that connects Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. The train takes about 39 hours to complete the trip. There are three classes of service on the railroad, including luxury cars. The cost is fairly inexpensive, with a one-way fare costing U.S. \$62. Additional railroad lines running east and west are being built by the government. Internal air travel is subsidized by tourists. For instance, it cost U.S. \$120 to fly between Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City for a tourist, but only U.S. \$30 or \$40 for a Vietnamese citizen. There is not sufficient money in the budget to improve the infrastructure on a short-term basis.

The greatest asset of Vietnam is its intelligent workers who are paid extremely low wages. At an evening meeting with representatives of the U.S. business community, the delegation heard repeatedly that Vietnam has a long way to go. A banker said the only way his bank ever would loan any money in Vietnam is if the parent organization outside Vietnam guaranteed the loan. A developer who plans to construct some beachfront condominiums in Vietnam claimed that instead of the normal 70 percent foreign/30 percent Vietnamese split, he had negotiated 100 percent foreign ownership. The project was priced at \$276.3 million, with \$67.5 million needed to start. However, he has been unable to obtain any investors.

The Vice Chairman of the Red Cross in Vietnam with whom the delegation met made an impassioned plea for help from the United States in treating dengue fever. This disease is dramatically on the rise in Vietnam and Southeast Asia.

A Vietnamese newspaper editor the delegation met at a dinner claimed that there was a free press, although television and radio are state-owned. Interestingly enough, the next day an article appeared in a non-Vietnamese newspaper that stated the press in Vietnam is controlled totally by the government. The same problem exists in Vietnam as it did in Eastern Europe, i.e., the outside world and its economic success and political freedom cannot be hidden forever. Some Vietnamese have computers with access to the Internet and there also are televisions with satellite hookups that include programs from the United States.

An observation made by the delegation is that the Vietnamese have a great deal of ingenuity. Several stories illustrate this point.

Several years ago, there was a rat epidemic in Vietnam. The government agreed to give a cash bounty for each rat tail brought to a government office. The gestation period for rats is 30 days. Rather than killing the rats, the Vietnamese began breeding them all across the country so that instead of having fewer rats, there were more. It was a good cash crop!

There also is a scheme involving antiques. It is forbidden to take antiques out of the country. However, in some stores they say it is all right and give documentation that they state is correct. The dealer then tells a friend in customs about the antique purchased so that it is confiscated and returned to the store to be sold once again!

The underground economy of Vietnam provides a second and third income for families. The delegation met one family where the breadwinner is an accountant with a government agency. He is supporting 29 other family members who have no official jobs. Apparently, this is not unusual.

CONCLUSION

The United States should pay more attention to Vietnam. It has the fourth largest population in Southeast Asia and is growing rapidly. Older members of the government are retiring and being replaced with a younger generation who want to change the system. Even though there is only one political party, there is some dissension and discussion among the various factions of the Assembly.

The United States should enter into exchange programs, assist with health problems and eventually bring Vietnam into a trade status equal to that of most other countries in the world. This appears to be a country where a minimum amount of extra effort and money on the part of the United States could pay large dividends in the future. It may take from five to ten years to bring the political and economic machinery in Vietnam to a point where private investments from the United States increase dramatically, yet much can be done in that period of time.

Ambassador Peterson is well respected throughout the country. He has a good team, which the delegation believes is realistic in its appraisal of the tough job they face.

The Vietnamese truly are assisting with U.S. MIA cases. It appears that there is not the ill will one would expect after a long war. A major reason for this is that the population is so young. Furthermore, Vietnam's history shows that it has fought foreigners for the last thousand years. The United States is just one in a series of invaders. The Vietnamese are attracted by the Yankee dollar and know-how. One Member of the Vietnam Assembly summed it up when he said, "What is past is past. We need to look forward and build a better future for both countries."

PERSONS MET BY THE U.S. ASSOCIATION OF FORMER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS DELEGATION STUDY TOUR TO VIETNAM OCTOBER 8-14, 1998

Hanoi

Tom Donohue, Head of the American Chamber of Commerce.

Ambassador and Mrs. Pete Peterson (Vi Le), U.S. Embassy—Hanoi, No. 7 Lang Ha, Hanoi, Vietnam.

Nguyen Van Hieu, Member of the National Assembly, 35 Ngo Quyen Street, Hanoi, Vietnam.

Vu Viet Dzung, Chief Officer of the Americas Desk, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1 Ton That Dam Street, Hanoi, Vietnam.

Tran Quoc Tuan, Vice Chairman, Office of the National Assembly, Van Phong Quoc Hoi, 35 Ngo Quyen Street, Hanoi, Vietnam.

Vu Mao, Chairman, National Assembly Office, Member of the National Assembly, Van Phong Quoc Hoi, 35 Ngo Quyen Street, Hanoi, Vietnam.

Ms. Pham Chi Lan, Executive Vice President, Vietnam Chamber of Commerce, 33 Ba Trieu Street, Hanoi, Vietnam.

Hoang Cong Thuy, Deputy Secretary General, Viet-My Society (Vietnam-USA Association), 105/A Quan Thanh Street, Hanoi, Vietnam.

Ho Chi Minh City

Truong Quang Giao, Vietnam News Agency, Manager, Quoc Te International Hotel, 19 Vo Van Tan Street, District 3, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Dr. Huynh Tan-Mam, Vice Director of the Red Cross, Vietnam Red Cross—Ho Chi Minh City Chapter, 201 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai Street, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Dr. Thai Duy Bao, Department Head, International Relations, Vietnam National University, 10-12 Dinh Tien Hoang Street, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Adrian Love, Independent Financial Advisor, 261-263 Le Thanh Ton Street, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Pham Tan Nghia, Director, Vietnam-USA Society, 160 Dien Bien Phu Street, District 3, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Ronald Kiel, Managing Director, 3M Representative Office, 55 Cao Thang Street, District 3, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Nguyen Ba Hung, Baker & McKenzie International Lawyers, 10 Harcourt Road, Hong Kong.

Chuyen D. Uong, Branch Manager, Citibank, N.A., 115 Nguyen Hue Blvd., 15-F, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

William Yarmey, Senior Marketing Officer, U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service, U.S. Department of Commerce, 65 Le Loi Blvd., Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you very much, Bob.

Mr. Speaker, as you can see, the Association conducts a wide variety of programs, some of which we have touched on this morning and which we hope to expand. This would not be possible without the support and active work of a number of people, and I would like to acknowledge the support we have had from our Board of Directors and our Counselors.

In particular, I would like to thank the officers of the Association, John Erlenborn, who is chairing this session today and is our Vice President; Larry LaRocco, who is our Treasurer; and Jack Buechner, who is our Secretary. They have done a fantastic job. As others have said, Lou Frey, as our former Chair, also serves on our Executive Board.

We also want to thank the Auxiliary, whose members have been instrumental, among other things, in making our Life After Congress seminars successful, in helping Members make the transition from the Congress to life after Congress.

We would not be able to do anything if we did not have a very capable staff, and many of you are familiar with our staff and I know are grateful for their work. I would like to acknowledge their support: Linda Reed, our Executive Director; Peter Weichlein, our Program Officer, with special responsibility for the Study Group on Germany; Victor Kytasty, who is our Congressional Fellow in Ukraine; and Walt

Raymond, who many of you know is our Senior Advisor for International Programs and works to put together many of these international efforts.

We also maintain relations as an Association with the Association of Former Parliamentarians in other countries, and we are very pleased at lunch today we are going to have Barry Turner once again representing the former parliamentarians in Canada. We will hear a few words from Barry, for those of you who will join us for lunch.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is my sad duty to inform the House of those persons who have served in Congress and have passed away since our report last year. The deceased Members of Congress are the following:

Watkins Abbott of Virginia;
Thomas Abernethy of Mississippi;
E. Y. Berry of South Dakota;
Gary Brown of Michigan;
Lawton Chiles of Florida;
James McClure Clarke of North Carolina;
Jeffrey Cohelan of California;
George Danielson of California;
David W. Dennis of Indiana;
Charles Diggs, Jr., of Michigan;
Carl Elliott of Alabama;
Dante B. Fascell of Florida;
Barry Goldwater, Sr., of Arizona;
Albert Gore, Sr., of Tennessee;
Robert A. Grant of Indiana;
Floyd K. Haskell of Colorado;
Roman L. Hruska of Nebraska;
Muriel Humphrey of Minnesota;
Albert W. Johnson of Pennsylvania;
Joe M. Kilgore of Texas;
Walter Moeller of Ohio;
Wilmer D. Mizell of North Carolina;
Abraham Ribicoff of Connecticut;
Will Rogers, Jr., of California;
D. F. Slaughter of Virginia;
Gene Taylor of Missouri;
Morris K. Udall of Arizona;
Prentiss Walker of Mississippi;
Compton L. White of Idaho;
Chalmers Wylie of Ohio; and
Sam Yorty of California.

I would respectfully ask all of you to rise for just a moment of silence in the memory of our deceased Members.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, we have now reached the highlight of our presentation this morning. As you know, the Association presents a Distinguished Service Award to an outstanding public servant each year. The award rotates between the parties, as do the officers in our Association.

Last year, the award was presented jointly to two exceptional former Republican Senators, Nancy Kassebaum Baker and Howard Baker. This year, as you know, we are pleased to be honoring the former House Speaker, Jim Wright.

Jim Wright was born in Fort Worth, Texas, a city he represented in Congress from 1955 through 1989. He completed public school in 10 years and was on his way to finishing college in 3 years when Pearl Harbor was attacked. Following enlistment in the Army Air Corps, Jim received his flyer's wings

and a commission at 19. He flew combat missions in the South Pacific and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Legion of Merit.

After the war, Jim was elected to the Texas legislature at age 23. At age 26 he became the youngest mayor in Texas when voters chose him to head their city government in Weatherford, his boyhood home.

Elected to Congress at the age of 31, Jim served 18 consecutive terms and authored major legislation in the fields of foreign affairs, economic development, water conservation, education, energy and many others.

Speaker Wright received worldwide recognition for his efforts to bring peace to Central America. He served 10 years as majority leader before being sworn in as Speaker on January 6, 1987. He was reelected as Speaker in January of 1989. A member of Congress for 34 years, Jim served with eight U.S. presidents and has met and come to know many foreign heads of state and current leaders of nations. A prolific writer, he has authored numerous books.

He currently serves as a Senior Political Consultant to American Income Life Insurance Company and Arch Petroleum. He writes a frequent newspaper column, which I hope many of you have had the chance to read. I have. They are very insightful. And he occasionally appears on network television news programs. In addition, he is a visiting professor at Texas Christian University where he teaches a course entitled "Congress and the Presidents."

This is a particularly difficult time for Jim. Among other things, he is moving his residence now, and that is why Betty, his wife, could not be with us. But we are really delighted that his daughter Ginger has come with him from Texas to be with us for this occasion.

Jim, if you would come up, I have two presentations to make. The first is a plaque. I am sure Jim has no plaques at home any more. I am going to read the inscription on this plaque, Jim; and I am going to read it from the paper since my eyes cannot read the inscription on the plaque. But I hope you can.

It says: "Presented by the U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress to the Honorable Jim Wright for his exemplary service to the State of Texas and the Nation as a combat pilot in World War II and recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross, as a mayor and State legislator, and as a Member of the United States Congress for 34 years, including his distinguished leadership as Majority Leader and Speaker of the House of Representatives. Washington, D.C., May 13, 1999."

On a more personal note, I am presenting Jim on behalf of all of us a scrapbook, which includes personal letters from many of us here and others who feel so strongly that Jim has contributed to the Congress and the country in ways which cannot be fully ex-

pressed but for which we are all deeply grateful.

So, Jim, these are some of the letters, and I am sure there will be others coming in the mail. We would invite you, Jim, to say whatever you would like. We are delighted you are here, and we are very proud of your service.

Mr. WRIGHT. Thank you so very much, Matt, and thanks to each of you, my former colleagues. I shall treasure and cherish these mementoes for as long as I live.

I guess I am lucky to be here in a way today. Two months ago yesterday I was fortunate to have some rather complicated surgery. Good surgeons removed this jaw, and it was cancerous, and then they reached down to my lower left leg, for the fibula bone, from which they carved a new jawbone, and this is it, and it works.

They also removed about one-fourth to one-fifth of my tongue, and that frightened my wife and others when they heard of it. I did not know about it at the time.

But in addition to that bit of modern alchemy, they took a piece of skin from the upper part of my left leg and attached it, grafted it, to the tongue, and I hope you can understand me.

All of this occasioned a comment from my long-time friend and former administrative assistant, Marshall Lynam, who said, "You know, Mr. Speaker, we spent 40 years trying to keep your foot out of your mouth, and now it seems you got your whole leg in it."

Words would fail me were I to try to express adequately how much I appreciate this, particularly coming from those of you, almost all of you I served with, and whom I knew and became so attached to during all of those years.

Like most of you, I guess, I had a lot more financial success before and after I served in Congress, but this experience of serving in this body will forever be professionally for me the outstanding achievement in my life. I enjoyed it thoroughly—most of the time. I think that would be true of all of us, truth to tell.

I do want to encourage our Association and encourage individuals among us to participate in these splendid activities by which we spread knowledge and understanding of this peculiar institution, so peculiarly human, maybe the most human institution on earth.

You know, the House and Congress can rise to heights of sparkling statesmanship and we can sink to levels of mediocrity, because we are human, prone to human error. But the more people are able to understand it, people abroad with whom our Nation must deal and youngsters on the college campuses, the stronger and firmer will be our hold upon the future.

Since I left Congress in 1989, almost 10 years ago, I have been on between 45 and 50 different college campuses throughout the country, and that is the most fun I have, aside from being with my grandchildren. I guess it is

second, because they are so vibrant, they are so alive, they are so quizzical, they are so questioning, all over the country. I have had the privilege of being at the University of Maine and the University of San Diego State. I have had the opportunity to visit Gonzaga University and the University of Miami. So it is spread across the country, and all of them, all of them, are interesting. They are all worth spending some time with. I would encourage that.

I would hope that we, wherever we go and whatever we say and do, will have the grace to glorify this institution, so human, so imperfect, and yet so fraught with great opportunities, to uphold its standards and defend its honor, so often attacked, so frequently misunderstood, to the end that there might be a better and firmer appreciation of this hallowed form of government that was endowed by those who wrote our Constitution. Because I am convinced that, with all of its faults and flaws and human imperfections, it still is, just as it was in Abraham Lincoln's time, and may it forever remain, the last, best hope of earth.

Thank you for this great honor.

Mr. MCHUGH. It is very clear that Jim Wright is as eloquent with his second jaw as he was with his first.

Jim, we are truly proud of you and take joy in your being with us today and giving us the opportunity to honor you for your many years of service.

I would like at this point sort of extra-record to invite our former distinguished minority leader and friend, Bob Michel, to say a word.

Mr. MICHEL. Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, thank you so much for the opportunity to say just a few things, particularly prompted by our Association's giving the award this year to our former Speaker, Jim Wright. When I got the notice of it, I thought there could be no better choice and am so appreciative he has been so well received and under the conditions.

I tell you, I have been privy to several of the columns that Jim has written, very descriptive, and they move you just about to emotional tears with his eloquence.

I hope those of you who have not yet maybe had the opportunity to express your feelings in the letters that we find in the book that we have given Jim that you will do that. You can always add letters to that. It is a nice package of mementoes to keep.

You know with what sincerity Jim appeared here today with his very nice remarks, and I just want to join in congratulating him and the Association, particularly, for their choice in selecting our former Speaker to receive this honor today.

Thank you again, Jim, all the best to you.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you very much, Bob. Thanks to all of you for being with us today and participating, especially since it was a special opportunity to honor Jim Wright.

We have a program for the rest of the day. We hope that many of you will be able to participate in it. Of course, tonight we have our dinner.

So, again, thank you for being with us. This does conclude the 29th Annual Report of the U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress. Thank you.

Mr. ERLÉNBERG (presiding). The Chair again wishes to thank the members of the United States Association of Former Members of Congress for their presence here today.

Before terminating these proceedings, the Chair would like to invite any former Members who did not respond when the role was called to give their names to the reading clerks for inclusion on the role. Good luck to you all.

The Chair announces that the House will reconvene at 10:45 a.m.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 28 minutes a.m.), the House continued in recess.

□ 1047

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ROGERS) at 10 o'clock and 47 minutes a.m.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 669. An act to amend the Peace Corps Act to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2000 through 2003 to carry out that Act, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 101-509, the Chair, on behalf of the Secretary of the Senate, announces the appointment of James B. Lloyd, of Tennessee, to the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress.

PRINTING OF PROCEEDINGS HAD DURING RECESS

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the proceedings had during the recess be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and that all Members and former Members who spoke during the recess have the privilege of revising and extending their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

SUPPORT TAKE-HOME PAY INCREASE FOR AMERICANS

(Mr. KNOLLENBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, this year Federal taxes will consume almost 22 percent of the Gross Domestic Product, which means the Federal tax burden is at an all-time high.

With the economy strong and the Federal Government running a surplus, there is no excuse for taxing the American people at a higher rate than was needed to win World War II.

On the opening day of the 106th Congress, I introduced a bill to cut taxes across the board by 10 percent. The plan is the fairest and the simplest way to cut taxes because it benefits everybody who pays Federal income taxes.

An across-the-board tax cut would save the average American family some \$1,000 a year, money they can use for anything, for a down payment on a home, or to put aside for retirement. Either way, I know it would be better spent and better used by the family who earned it than by the Washington bureaucrat who yearns for it.

I urge my colleagues to support this common sense plan and increase the take-home pay of all Americans.

TRIBUTE TO NATION'S POLICE OFFICERS

(Ms. SANCHEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute the police officers of this Nation, especially those of the 46th Congressional District of California, Orange County police officers.

Seven hundred thousand police officers serve the United States each day. Most Americans probably do not know that our Nation loses on an average one officer every other day. That does not include the ones that are assaulted and injured each year.

More than 14,000 officers have been killed in the line of duty. The sacrifice for California officers is the greatest: 1,205.

The calling to serve in law enforcement comes with bravery and sacrifice. The thin blue line protecting our homes, our businesses, our families, our communities pay a price. So do the loved ones that they leave behind when the tragedy strikes.

We cannot replace the officers we lose. We cannot bring them back to their families or departments. All we can do is grieve their loss.

Today we fulfill the most solemn part of our obligation to America's police officers. We promise that, when they do make the sacrifice, that he or she earns a place of the highest national distinction and respect from the United States Government.

TRIBUTE TO DUANE MASENGILL, FAVORITE TEACHER

(Mr. ARMEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)